B”H (Blessed is G-d)

Introduction to PDF - This PDF couldn’t have been done without the strenuous efforts of Rabbi Gil Student. Thanks to his website Talmud.Faithweb.Com. I do not mean to infringe on his copyrights or the sorts. However, the website is old. It dropped in 2000, furthermore I love my digital library and I fear one day his old website could be hacked. Many links there are outdated. Therefore, I compiled this which is essentially to serve as his website to refute various slanderous claims on Rabbinic Judaism. I do not know much about Rabbi Gil other than he did some amazing work with this website.

Also, here’s a funny picture of a raccoon.

There was a lot of space LOL.
Anyways, I cleaned a few things up (minor grammar fixes, some commentary as well).

Index

Introduction - 3
What is the Talmud? - 6
Talmud and Bible - 10
What is Judaism? - 13
Telling The Truth - 16
Gentiles - 18
Gentiles Are Human - 23
Theft from Gentiles - 32
Paying Gentiles' Wages - 36
Cheating Gentiles is Forbidden - 39
Killing Gentiles is Forbidden - 42
Various Accusations - 45
Introduction to Christianity in The Talmud - 50
Jesus in the Talmud - 51
The Jesus Narrative in The Talmud - 60
Christianity in The Talmud - 74
Blood Libel - 75
The Passover Haggadah Is Not Racist - 79
Explaining Kol Nidrei - 80
The Talmud Doesn't Support Child Abuse - 85
The Real Story About Rabbi Eleazar - 88
Schindler's List - 90
In the Image of G-d - 91
The Term "Goy" - 95
Rabbi Soloveitchik Was A Bible Expert - 97
Ethics of Our Fathers - 104
Shabbat and Gentile Lives - 125
Kapparos, Tricking G-d? - 147
Loophole Religion, The Eruv - 148
The Fitz Conclusion - 151

Introduction

Anti-Talmud accusations have a long history dating back to the 13th century when the associates of the Inquisition attempted to defame Jews and their religion [see Yitzchak Baer, *A History of Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. I pp. 150-185]. The early material compiled by hateful preachers like Raymond Martini and Nicholas Donin remain the basis of all subsequent accusations against the Talmud. Some are true, most are false and based on quotations taken out of context, and some are total fabrications [see Baer, ch. 4 f. 54, 82 that it has been proven that Raymond Martini forged quotations]. On the internet today we can find many of these old accusations being rehashed and this site is an attempt to correct the mistakes and put the true quotes into their proper perspective.

The accusations against the Talmud can be divided into four categories [see Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, pp. 23-38].

1] The Talmud considers itself holier than the Bible
2] The Talmud contains passages that are blasphemous against Jesus and Mary

The first two accusations are essentially frivolous. What business is it of Christians if the Jewish Talmud is considered holier than the Bible (which it isn't)? And if Jews do not take the account of the Christian NT to be totally historically accurate, so what? To fundamentalist Christians, **EVERY** other religion is considered blasphemous. Why should the Talmud be judged within the Christian religious framework? Of course, any Jewish book is blasphemous within that framework because Judaism does not accept Jesus as the messiah. The very accusation that the Jewish Talmud is blasphemous to Christianity is redundant.

3] The Talmud has ridiculous and immoral statements

The third accusation is one that Jews have to work out for themselves. Should a Jew believe in a book that makes foolish and obscene comments? That a Jew does should not be relevant to gentiles. In fact, the allegedly foolish and immoral statements in the Talmud are sometimes non-existent but usually allegorical. The Talmud and associated literature developed an entire genre of parables and allegorical sayings that, when understood, shed light on the mysteries of life. However, when inadequately translated and ripped from their context they seem silly.

Dov Zlotnick, Introduction to Saul Lieberman's *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (1994), p. xx

Rabbinic texts that seem bizarre at first blush can become quite ordinary when properly understood. I remember Lieberman once being called by a popular national publication regarding a passage from the Talmud. To the caller, who was researching an article, the passage seemed silly. Its subject was the difference between a roll or a bundle of documents, and how each note of indebtedness was to be placed in relation to the other. After the Professor finished explaining the passage, the caller responded with surprise, "Why, this is reasonable!" "Of course," the Professor responded.

"Well, in that case," the caller replied, "I cannot use it."

4] The Talmud has laws that are racist and anti-gentile

The fourth accusation is the one on which I will be focussing. Because today's Orthodox Jews still lead their lives based on the laws contained in the Talmud, it is incumbent upon Jews to understand and explain that their religious laws are not racist or derogatory to gentiles. Jewish law, as contained in the Talmud, treats gentiles with the proper respect due to a person created in the image of G-d. Their property and lives are honored and any (mis)quotes from the Talmud indicating otherwise need to be seen in their original language and context.

I will be showing the **ENTIRE** passages in both their original Hebrew or Aramaic and in translation. I will also be providing a fuller context by bringing other quotations on the topics from other parts of the Talmud. After seeing all of the quotations, a proper judgement can be rendered. I will also be showing how Jewish commentators and legalists have understood these passages throughout history.

Even if a reader would believe that these talmudic quotations are racist, if Jews have always understood them differently then Jews cannot be considered racist. Even if someone can twist the words of the Talmud to be hateful, if Jews have always understood the Talmud in a non-hateful way then the argument is meaningless. The real exercise is to find the (allegedly racist) talmudic influence on Jews and Judaism and by perusing through the post-talmudic literature we can clearly find that this talmudic influence was not racist.

Is the Talmud racist or anti-gentile? No. But neither is it a universalist manifesto. It is a religious document written by those of the Jewish religion for others of the same faith. It favors Judaism over other religions and sets down rules on how to live in both an all-Jewish society and a mixed society. It legislates how to create

vibrant Jewish communities while still maintaining respect for the gentile society. Universalists would have everyone be treated exactly equally and live in non-denominational communities. However, the Talmud, which is concerned for the survival of the Jewish religion, must weigh both the respect for humanity and the need for Jewish survival throughout thousands of years of minority-status.

What we will demonstrate is that the consideration for the Jewish community **NEVER** relegates those outside of this community to an inhuman status. Gentiles are **ALWAYS** respected and their rights are secured.

The anti-talmudic lies are exactly that - lies. The wisdom of the Talmud has sustained Judaism for thousands of years and perhaps its very success is what has engendered so much jealous hatred.

What is the Talmud?

Jews believe that the entire Torah (Five Books of Moses) was written by Moses as dictated by G-d. This includes all of the happenings recorded in it from the time of creation. Even Deuteronomy, which is written as the testimony of Moses, was written at the express commandment of G-d. G-d dictated the book as if Moses were addressing the people. [Based on R. Aryeh Kaplan, *Handbook of Jewish Thought*, vol I 7:22-24]

Along with that written text of the Torah, G-d gave Moses an oral explanation. We can thus speak of two Torahs - the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. They complement each other and a true understanding of each will reveal that they are the same. In many cases the (written) Torah refers to details that are not included in the text, thus alluding to an oral tradition. For example, the Torah states (Deut. 12:21) "You shall slaughter your cattle… as I have commanded you" implying an oral commandment concerning ritual slaughter. Similarly, such commandments as Tefillin (Deut. 6:8) and Tzitzit (Numbers 15:38) are found in the Torah but no details are given and are assumed to be in the Oral Torah. Also, although keeping the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments, no details are given as to how it should be kept, and these are also in the unwritten tradition. G-d thus said (Jer. 17:22) "You shall keep the Sabbath holy, as I have commanded your fathers." [Kaplan, 9:1-5]

The Oral Torah was originally meant to be transmitted by word of mouth. It was relayed from teacher to student in such a way so that if the student had any questions he would be able to ask and thus avoid ambiguity. A written text, however, no matter how perfect, is always subject to misinterpretation. Furthermore, the Oral Torah was meant to cover the infinitude of cases which would arise in the course of time. It could never have been written in its entirety. G-d therefore gave Moses a set of rules through which the Torah could be applied to every possible case. [Kaplan, 9:8-9]

Besides receiving many explanations and details of laws, Moses also received hermeneutic rules for deriving laws from the written Torah and for interpreting it. In many cases, he was also given the cases in which these rules could be applied. Laws and details involving common everyday occurrences were

transmitted directly by Moses. However, laws involving infrequently occurring special cases were given in such a way as to be derivable from scripture by hermeneutic rules. Otherwise, there would be the danger that they would be forgotten. The actual laws that Moses taught directly were carefully preserved and one never finds a dispute concerning them. However, in the case of laws derived from hermeneutic rules or logic, occasional disputes can be found. Both of these types of laws have the same status as biblical laws and are considered of equal importance. Along with actual laws and the rules of derivation, G-d gave Moses many guidelines regarding how and under what conditions to enact new laws. This is the source of permission to enact rabbinical laws. [Kaplan, 9:20-25, 29]

The Oral Torah was handed down by word of mouth from Moses to Joshua, then to the Elders, the Prophets, and the men of the Great Assembly. The Great Assembly was led by Ezra at the beginning of the Second Temple and codified much of the Oral Torah into a form that could be memorized by the students. This codification was known as the **Mishnah**. This Mishnah was required to be handed down word for word exactly as it had been taught. [Kaplan, 9:31-33]

During the generations following the Great Assembly, the Mishnah was expanded by new legislation and case law. As controversies began to develop, variations in the Mishnah of the various teachers began to appear. At the same time, the order of the Mishnah was improved, especially by Rabbi Akiva. To end the disputes, Rabbi Judah the Prince redacted a final edition of the Mishnah which is what we have today. This was finished in the year 188 CE and was published approximately 30 years later. It systematically divided the Torah into six orders and subdivided these orders into tractates, with a total of 63 tractates among the six orders. [Kaplan, 9:37,39]

In compiling his work, R. Judah made use of the earlier Mishnah, condensing it and deciding among various disputed questions. The sages of his time all concurred with his decisions and ratified his edition. However, even rejected opinions were included in the text so that they would be recognized and not revived in later generations. [Kaplan 9:41]

Besides the Mishnah, other volumes were compiled by the students of R. Judah during this period. These include the **Tosefta** which follows the order of the Mishnah, as well as the Halachic Midrashim - the **Mechilta**, a commentary on Exodus, the **Sifra** on Leviticus, and the **Sifri** on Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Works from outside of R. Judah's school went by the name of **Baraita**. [Kaplan 9:46-47]

At this time, the practice was for students to first memorize the basics of the Oral Torah and then to carefully analyze their studies. During the period preceding R. Judah, the memorized laws developed into the Mishnah while the analysis developed into a second discipline known as the **Gemara**. After the Mishnah was compiled, these discussions continued, becoming very important in clarifying the Mishnah. The Gemara developed orally for some three hundred years following the redaction of the Mishnah. Finally, when it came into danger of being forgotten and lost, Rav Ashi, together with his school in Babylonia, undertook to collect all these discussions and set them in order. It was completed in the year 505 CE. [Kaplan, 9:47-48]

Together, the Mishnah and the Gemara are called the **Talmud**. They contain both legal rulings and back-and-forth discussions dissecting and clarifying these rulings. The community in Israel compiled a Talmud in the third century called the Jerusalem Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud was compiled over 200 years later and is universally accepted as authoritative. In matters of agreement, both Talmuds are consulted. In matters of dispute, the Babylonian Talmud is given precedence. Thus, the Babylonian Talmud is frequently called simply the Talmud.

Within the Oral Torah there are two components - Halachah and Aggadata. Halachah constitutes about ninety percent of the Talmud and nearly all of the Halachic Midrashim. Aggadata makes up the other ten percent of the Talmud - unevenly distributed among its tractates - and virtually the whole of the other Midrashic works.

Halachah is the easier of these two categories to define. It consists of the definitions, the sources, and the explanations of the laws of the Torah. Aggadata, on the other hand, consists of the world of Jewish ideas. Primarily it deals with the principles of faith, the philosophy, and the ethical ideas of Judaism. In addition, it includes all those interpretations of Biblical verses and stories which are unrelated to Jewish law; expositions of the importance of the laws and the rewards and punishments which they entail; stories from the lives of the righteous; lessons in character training; and even, sometimes, what appears to be practical advice on worldly matters such as business and health.

Aggadata, in contrast to the straight-forward and logical methodology of Halachah, conveys its teachings through less direct means. Aggadata is often intentionally obscure wherein the message - often one of the most basic ideas of Judaism - is garbed in what appears to be parables, riddles, or even practical advice without apparent religious content. Scriptural texts are usually understood exegetically rather than simply, despite the Talmudic dictum that the simple meaning of the verse is always true (Talmud Shabbat 63a). [Based on R. Aharon Feldman, *The Juggler and the King*, pp. xxi-xxii]

In summary, the Talmud is a complement to the Bible. It fills in the gaps and explains the laws of the Torah. In addition, it includes stories and sayings that both straightforwardly and allegorically offer the philosophy and wisdom of Judaism. However, the Talmud is a difficult text to read because it contains many discussions (that took place over hundreds of years) in the form of proof and disproof. The logical progressions lend itself to out-of-context quotes that represent a soon-to-be toppled assumption.

Talmud and Bible

The Accusation

The Talmud is Judaism's holiest book (actually a collection of books). Its authority takes precedence over the Old Testament in Judaism. Evidence of this may be found in the Talmud itself, Erubin 21b (Soncino edition): "My son, be more careful in the observance of the words of the Scribes than in the words of the Torah (Old Testament)."

It is indeed interesting that anyone should make this claim about the Talmud. While it is certainly not true that Judaism views the Talmud as being holier than the Bible, what if it were true? How does that in any way show that Judaism is wrong?

However, as with most of these claims, the exact opposite is true. Judaism considers the Bible to be its holiest book and biblical laws are considered most important. Judaism views the Torah (Five Books of Moses) as the literal word of G-d. The Prophets (Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremeiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Prophets) are the divinely inspired words of the prophets to the people and the Sacred Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Chronicles) are the divinely inspired words of the prophets to be inscribed. The Bible is the holiest book to Judaism and is treated with special respect. The following is taken from the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (Abridged Code of Jewish Law) in the laws regarding treatment of a Torah scroll.

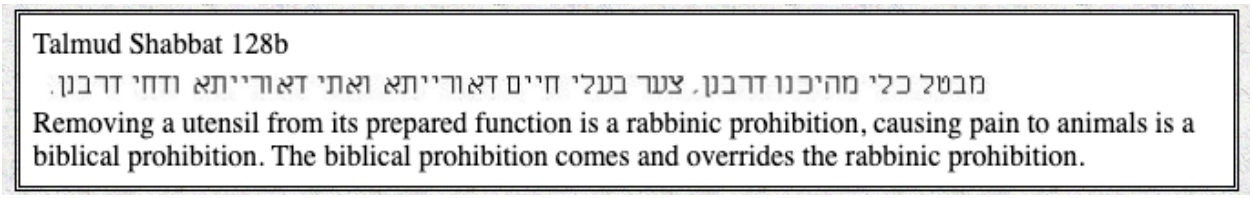
Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 28:3

חייב אדם לנהוג כבוד גדול בספר-תורה, ומצוה ליחד וה מקום, ולכבד את המקום ההוא ולהדרו ביותר, ולא ירוק כנגד הספר-תורה, ולא יאחז ספר-תורה בלא מטפחת. הרואה את הנושא ספר-תורה צריך לעמוד לפניו עד שיכנים את הספר-תורה למקומו או עד שאינו רואהו עוד.

A person is obligated to treat a Torah scroll with great respect and it is praiseworthy to appoint it a special place and to respect that place and beautify it. One should not spit in front of a Torah scroll and one should not hold it without a cloth [in between the scroll and one's bare hands]. One who sees someone carrying a Torah scroll must rise before it until the Torah scroll is placed in its position or until one no longer sees it.

Similarly, we treat the Bible with such respect that no books are allowed to be placed on top of a Bible. Even a book of the Prophets or Sacred Writings may not

be placed on top of a Torah [Talmud Megillah 27a]. From a legal perspective, biblical laws are more important than rabbinic laws.



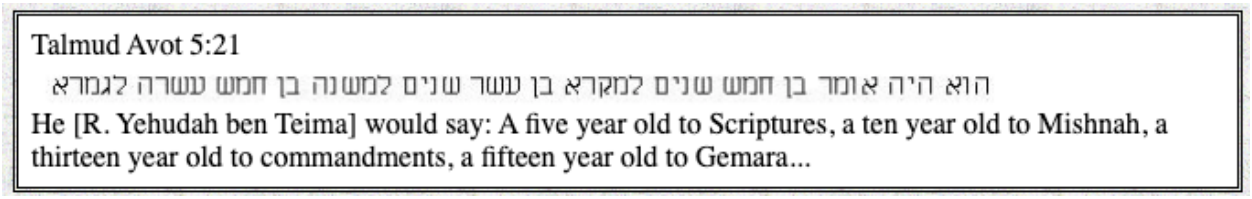
Talmud Shabbat 128b

מבטל כלי מהיכנו דרבנן. צער בעלי חיים דאורייתא ואתי דאורייתא ודחי דרבנן.

Removing a utensil from its prepared function is a rabbinic prohibition, causing pain to animals is a biblical prohibition. The biblical prohibition comes and overrides the rabbinic prohibition.

We see the same in Talmud Pesachim 9b that we are stricter with biblical laws than with rabbinic laws. In Talmud Pesachim 4b, Eiruvin 30, and Ketuvot 28b children's testimony is seen as acceptable only for rabbinic laws but not for biblical laws because they have stricter requirements. In Talmud Berachot 21a we see that when in doubt whether a biblical commandment has been fulfilled one must repeat it but when in doubt whether a rabbinic commandment has been fulfilled there is no need to repeat it. A similar idea is repeated in Talmud Avodah Zarah 7a - when there are two opinions about a biblical commandment we follow the stricter opinion but when there are two opinions about a rabbinic commandment we follow the more lenient opinion. Anyone familiar with Talmudic thinking immediately recognizes the ridiculousness of a claim that Judaism considers the Talmud more important than the Bible.

Not only is the Bible important to Jews, but the Talmud tells us that we are obligated to study it.

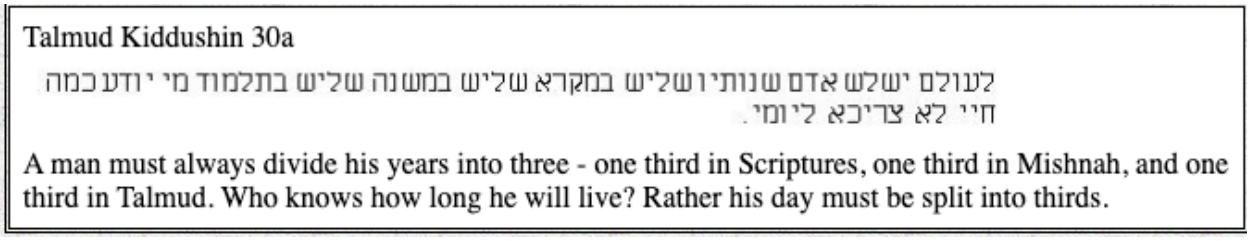


Talmud Avot 5:21

הוא היה אומר בן חמש שנים למקרא בן עשר שנים למשנה בן חמש עשרה לגמרא

He [R. Yehudah ben Teima] would say: A five year old to Scriptures, a ten year old to Mishnah, a thirteen year old to commandments, a fifteen year old to Gemara...

However, Bible study may begin at the age of five but the Talmud tells us that it must remain a major part of our daily study routine.



Talmud Kiddushin 30a

לעולם ישלש אדם שנותיו שליש במקרא שליש במשנה שליש בתלמוד מי יודע כמה חיי לא צריכא ליומי.

A man must always divide his years into three - one third in Scriptures, one third in Mishnah, and one third in Talmud. Who knows how long he will live? Rather his day must be split into thirds.

In fact, Talmud Berachot 8b tells us that a Jew must review a portion of the Torah each week twice and again in translation and finish the Torah each year.

There is no question that the Bible, as the Written Law, is a center-piece of Judaism and while the Talmud may contain discussions of the Oral Law, the Bible has precedence.

What is Judaism?

Is Judaim as religion or a race? This question is frequently asked and is a misleading one. You must choose between one or the other. The truth is that it is neither. In fact, there is no word in the English language that adequately expresses the nature of Judaism and to limit one's ideas to those words that are available in English is to commit a grave error. Analytic philosophers spend a great deal of time understanding how language affects thought. It is our duty to avoid allowing the English language to force us into a particular thought pattern.

Most Jews share common racial characteristics. However, that is not an absolute rule because Judaism accepts converts and therefore even one without those racial characteristics is still very much a Jew. Even someone as gentile as Haman, an Amalekite [Esther 3:1; 1 Samuel 15:8], had descendants who converted to Judaism and became respected scholars [Talmud Gittin 57b, Sanhedrin 96b].

Judaism is a religion in that there are basic beliefs and practices that are incumbent on each Jew. However, even those who fail to practice or to believe are still Jews [Talmud Yevamot 47b; *Shulchan Aruch*, Yoreh Deah 268:12].

The Jewish People

A Jew is someone, or a descendant of someone, who willingly accepted the obligation to fulfill G-d's commandments as explained in the Written and Oral Torah. The acceptance may have been at Mt. Sinai or anytime since as an act of conversion. However, as a result of his accepting, he and his descendants must fulfill these commandments. That is on a personal level.

Additionally, by accepting these commandments he has joined the Jewish people. What is the Jewish people? Is it a semi-secret nation out for its own political and economic power? No. It is a group of people united in their spiritual quest who, through a metaphysical union, are joined together in destiny. Jews are obligated to care for each other's spiritual welfare and, by extension, physical welfare also. We distribute funds to help the indigent and teach each other G-d's word.

However, we are not just a group of individuals with the same goal. We are one people and, as such, we must treat each other as if we were part of the same whole.

Consider the case of revenge. On a small scale, revenge is not only natural, it is fair. If you jump in front of me in line it is only fair that another time I jump in front of you. In that way I recover what you took from me. If you refuse to lend me your lawn mower it is only fair that I be allowed to refuse to lend you my rake. However, the Bible tells us it is forbidden to take revenge or bear a grudge against other Jews [see Midrash Sifra ad. loc.]. Why does the Bible prohibit acting towards a fellow Jew fairly and require treatment better than fair?

Jerusalem Talmud Nedarim 9:4 (30a-b)

כתיב לא תקום ולא תטור את בני עמך. היך עבידא הוה קופד ומחת סכינא לידוי תחזור ותמחי לידיה.

It say [Leviticus 19:18] "You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people." How could this be? [If the Bible was coming to tell us not to get used to acting with bad character traits it should apply even to those outside of your people - Korban Ha'Eidah commentary] It is as if you were cutting meat and the knife slipped and cut your hand. Would that hand cut your other hand [in revenge]?

The Jewish people are one organic unit and each Jew is spiritually connected with his fellow. To take vengeance on a fellow Jew is like the left hand taking vengeance on the right hand. They are two parts of the same whole.

For this reason, while Jews must treat everyone with respect, they must treat each other better. They are different parts of the same nation and must treat each other as one self [see the end of Leviticus 19:18].

The *tochachah*, the discussion of divine retribution, is said twice in the Pentateuch - Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. An astute reader will note that in Leviticus the Hebrew grammar is strictly plural while in Deuteronomy the Hebrew grammar is strictly singular. Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer (the famous Vilna Gaon) explains that Leviticus is referring to the nation as a group of individuals and is, as such, a warning to all individuals to follow the laws. Deuteronomy, however, is a warning to the nation as a whole. The Jewish people are a single nation who are punished as a whole even when the whole is not to blame [Aderet Eliyahu to Deut. 28]. When a person's hand becomes infected the entire body suffers pain.

Similarly, when one Jew sins the entire nation is punished. Thus, as one nation we are united in our destiny whether we like it or not.

What we will show in this site is that Jews must treat all gentiles fairly. However, because of their connection they treat each other as family, as part of the same nation.

See R. Meir Simcha HaCohen, *Meshech Chochmah*, Haftorah for Parshat Devarim; R. Yosef Engel, *Otzrot Yosef*, 2; R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Divrei Hagut Vaha'arachah*, pp. 223-237; R. Hershel Schachter, *Eretz HaTzvi*, 17; R. Yonason Sacks, *The Torah U-Madda Journal* (Yeshiva University:1990), vol. 2 pp. 70-75, R. Mayer Twersky, *TorahWeb*, Shavuot 1999.

Telling The Truth

The Accusation

"To communicate anything to a goy about our religious relations would be equal to the killing of all Jews, for if they knew what we teach about them they would kill us openly." - Libbre David 37.

"If a Jew be called upon to explain any part of the rabbinic books, he ought to give only a false explanation. Who ever will violate this order shall be put to death." Libbre David 37.

While it is *possible* that the book Libbre David existed I have not been able to find it, even with the help of a librarian from Yeshiva University's Gottesman Library. It was certainly never a mainstream book. In fact, it is strictly prohibited to lie about the contents of the Talmud.

Let us take an extreme example and see the conclusions of some legal authorities. What should a rabbi do if a disgruntled pig farmer came to his house, aimed a gun at the rabbi, and said "I want pigs to be kosher. Tell me, rabbi, are pigs kosher?"

R. Yishayahu HaLevy Horowitz, *Shnei Luchot Habrit*, Masechet Shevuot p. 33b (Jerusalem:1975)

אסור לשנות דברי תורה אף בזמן הסכנה וחייב למסור עצמו עליה.

It is forbidden to change the words of Torah even in times of danger; one must give one's life over it.

R. Shlomo Luria, *Yam Shel Shlomo*, Bava Kamma 4:9

אלא ש"מ שמחוייבים אנו למסור על קידוש השם. ואם ח"ו ישנה הדין הוה ככופר בתורת משה... אבל לומר על הפטור חייב או להיפך היה ככופר בתורת משה. מה לי דיבור אחד מה לי כל התורה.

Rather we see from here that we are obligated to give ourselves over and sanctify G-d's name and if one, G-d forbid, changes one law it is as if he denied the Torah of Moses... To [lie and] say that one who is innocent is guilty or vice versa is like denying the Torah of Moses. What is the difference between denying one word and denying the entire Torah?

According to Rabbis Horowitz and Luria it is **FORBIDDEN** to lie about the Torah or Talmud even if it means losing one's life. A proof is frequently brought from the Jerusalem Talmud Sanhedrin 2:1 (9b), Horiot 3:1 (11b). Another proof is brought from Talmud Bava Kamma 38a where the story is told of two Roman soldiers who were taught by rabbis the entire Written and Oral Law and found only one point to be offensive. Evidently the rabbis taught the truth about the laws to occupying soldiers even though the soldiers might find them offensive.

There is a dissenting view, however. The *Yad Eliyahu* (responsa 48) suggests that even though it is forbidden to lie about the Torah or Talmud, when there is a clear and present threat to human life it is better to lie than to have blood shed. According to the *Yad Eliyahu*, the rabbi would lie to the disgruntled pig farmer until he is calm and disarmed.

However, all agree that barring such extreme circumstances it is forbidden to lie about the contents of the Torah or Talmud.

Gentiles

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Teshuvah 3:4 based on Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:1; Talmud Sanhedrin 105a

חסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא

Righteous gentiles have a place in the world to come.

Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1:1

כתיב ומשפט ורב צדקה לא יענה אין הקב"ה משהא שכרן של עושה מצות בגוי

It says (Job 37:23): "With justice and an abundance of kindness, He does not deal harshly." G-d does not withhold reward from gentiles who perform His commandments.

In the Jewish worldview all gentiles who are ethical monotheists will achieve salvation. Judaism does not denigrate gentiles and does not see them as condemned to eternal damnation. Rather we see them as fellow human beings, from other nations, searching for G-d and for meaning in life. Judaism wishes them well with their search and celebrates those who succeed in becoming ethical monotheists. Jews are obligated in many rituals and ceremonies and those Jews who fail to fulfill these rituals are considered sinners. Gentiles, however, are not obligated in these commandments and are only obligated to be ethical monotheists. Those who fulfill this obligation receive their full reward in the world-to-come.

There are three main categories of gentiles [see R. Yom Tov ben Avraham Alshevili, *Chiddushei HaRitva*, Makkot 9a n.]. The first category is the gentile who fulfills his obligations as an ethical monotheist. This person is generally called a Ben Noach (or Noachide) meaning a proud descendant of the biblical Noah. In the Jewish tradition Noah and his sons were commanded to fulfill seven commandments which amount to ethical monotheism [see Aaron Lichtenstein, *The Seven Laws of Noah*]. Those gentiles who observe these commandments are considered righteous gentiles. They are, however, not Jews and are not considered part of Jewish society. They are righteous people and recognized for their accomplishments. However, they remain part of the human brotherhood but not part of Jewish society.

There are those who go beyond this step and approach a Jewish court and, in exchange for entering Jewish society, they vow to observe their commandments and be ethical monotheists. Such a person is called a Ger Toshav. By pledging that he will fulfill his obligation to be an ethical monotheist he enters Jewish society. He is not a convert and does not become Jewish. In fact, he can worship any monotheistic religion he chooses. He is, however, a righteous gentile and is gladly received into the Jewish community. He is welcome to live in Jewish neighborhoods (should he so choose), is supported by Jewish charities (if he so needs), and is considered part of the fabric of Jewish society in many ways [see Talmud Pesachim 21b; Talmud Avodah Zarah 65b; Nachmanides, *Additions to Book of Commandments*, 16; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Zechi'ah Umattanah 3:11, Hilchot Melachim 10:12; Ra'avad of Posquieres, *Comments to Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Issurei Biah 14:8]. Both the Ben Noach and the Ger Toshav are righteous gentiles. However, the Ben Noach has not entered Jewish society and perhaps does not wish to. Therefore, he is treated like a stranger. He is respected as a righteous human being, one who is fulfilling his divine purpose in the world. However, he is not part of the Jewish community.

It is of these two categories of gentiles that the Talmudic literature states:

Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 8:2

ה' אוהב צדיקים וגו' כך אמר הקב"ה אני אוהבי אהב וכה"א כי מכבדי אכבד הם אוהבים אותי ואף אני אוהב אותם ולמה הקב"ה אוהב צדיקים שאינן נחלה אינם משפחה. את מוצא הכהנים בית אב הם הלויים בית אב הם שנאמר בית אהרון ברכו את ה' בית הלוי ברכו את ה'. אם מבקש אדם להיות כהן אינו יכול להוית לוי אינו יכול למה שלא היה אביו לא כהן ולא לוי. אבל אם מבקש אדם להיות צדיק אפילו גוי יכול הוא שאינו לא בית אב לכך הוא אומר ירא' ה' ברכו את ה' בית ירא' ה' לא נאמר אלא ירא' ה' אינו בית אב אלא מעצמם נתנדבו ואהבו להקב"ה לפיכך הקב"ה אוהבם.

(Psalms 146:8) "G-d loves the righteous." G-d said: 'I love those who love Me and so it says (1 Samuel 2:30) "For I honor those who honor Me." They love Me so I love them in return.' Why does G-d love the righteous? Because righteousness is not an inheritance or a family trait. You find that priests are from a priestly family and Levites are from a levitical family as it says (Psalms 135:19-20) "O house of Aaron bless G-d! O house of Levi bless G-d!" If someone wants to become a priest [from the family of Aaron] or a Levite he cannot because his father was not a priest or a Levite. However, if someone wants to become righteous even if he is a gentile he can because it is not a family trait as it says (ibid.) "O those who fear G-d bless G-d!" It does not say the house of those who fear G-d but those who fear G-d. It is not a family trait rather on their own they chose to fear and love G-d. Therefore, G-d loves them.

Midrash Sifra, Acharei Mot 9:13

אשר יעשה אותם היה רבי ירמיה אומר אתה אומר מנין אפילו נכרי ועושה את התורה הרי הוא ככ"ג ת"ל אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם. וכן הוא אומר חאת תורת הכהנים והלויים וישראל לא נאמר כאן אלא חאת תורת האדם ה' אלוקים. וכן הוא אומר פתחו שערים ויבא כהנים לויים וישראלים לא נאמר אלא ויבא גוי צדיק שומר אמונים. וכן הוא אומר זה השער לה' כהנים לויים וישראלים לא נאמר אלא צדיקים יבואו בא. וכן הוא אומר רננו כהנים לויים וישראלים לא נאמר אלא רננו צדיקים בה'. וכן הוא אומר הטיבה ה' לכהנים ללויים ולישראלים לא נאמר כאן אלא הטיבה ה' לטובים. הא אפילו נכרי ועושה את התורה הרי הוא ככהל גדול.

(Leviticus 18:5) "Which man shall carry out and by which he shall live." Rabbi Yirmiyah would say: We see from here that even a gentile who fulfills his laws is like a [Jewish] high priest. He would also say: (2 Samuel 7:19) "And that would be fitting for priests, Levites, and Israelites" is not what it says rather "and that would be fitting for great men - O Lord G-d." He would also say: (Isaiah 26:2) "Open the gates so the priests, Levites, and Israelites may enter" is not what it says rather "Open the gates so the righteous nation, keeper of the faith, may enter." He would also say: (Psalms 118:20) "This is the gate of G-d; priests, Levites, and Israelites" is not what it says rather "This is the gate of G-d; the righteous shall enter through it." He would also say: (Psalms 33:1) "Sing joyfully, O priests, Levites, and Israelites" is not what it says rather "Sing joyfully, O righteous, because of G-d." He would also say: (Psalms 125:4) "Do good, G-d, to the priests, Levites, and Israelites" is not what it says rather "Do good, G-d, to good people." We see from here that even a gentile who follows his commandments is [as righteous as the Jewish] high priest.

The third category is of the gentile who is not an ethical monotheist. He is violating the covenant G-d made with Noah and his descendants and will be punished for those sins. It is with these people that Judaism has a very ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, they are acting contrary to G-d's purpose in the world. For this reason, Judaism tries to distance Jews from them. On the other hand, they are people created in G-d's image and must be respected as such. The compromise is that their positive traits, examples of which we will shortly see, are recognized and respected. However, their negative traits are never fully forgotten and full societal integration with such people is discouraged.

Talmud Semachot 1:8

ר' יהודה אומר הוי טב הוי ואמן אוכל מעמלו. אמרו לו אם כן מה הנחת לכשרין. אמר להם אם היה כשר מפני מה אין קורין עליו.

Rabbi Yehudah said: [The euology of a gentile is] Alas! The good, alas! The faithful who eats the fruit of his own labor. [The sages] said to him: What then did you leave for the worthy? He replied: If he [the gentile] was worthy why should he not be lamented in this manner.

Professor Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, p. 77

The virtues enumerated in this eulogy are purely secular; there is no trace of religion in them. The man was good, faithful and enjoyed the fruits of his labor. The Gentiles spoken of is a heathen; he is neither a semi-proselyte nor a Christian; no mention is made of his fear of G-d... The Rabbis understood the heathen society and credited it with the virtues it was not devoid of.

Those gentiles who have the status of Ger Toshav, who have requested acceptance into Jewish society and have pledged obedience to their commandments, are treated almost like Jews. Those who have the status of Ben Noach because they have not requested acceptance are respected but are not treated like brethren. They receive letter-of-the-law treatment because to treat them beyond that would be to detract from our brothers. What has a Ger Toshav gained if a Ben Noach is treated the same? What extra connection is there between fellow Jews and within the entire Jewish/Ger Toshav society if everyone is treated extra specially?

Consider the case of a family. My brother needs to borrow money and knows that if he asks me I'll give him the special interest-free family package. This type of family treatment solidifies us as a unit and increases love between us. I don't hate everyone else because I treat my brother specially but I have an agreement that my family receives special treatment. Now, what if a stranger off the street knocks on my door and I give him also my special interest-free family loan? It loses its specialness and there is no difference between my bond with my brother and my bond with some guy off the street. Should I treat every human being equally or should I treat everyone properly and reserve extra-special treatment for my family?

The same applies within the Jewish/Ger Toshav society. All members, both Jewish and gentile, are joined together as a community united in its single goal of worshipping the one G-d. While we treat all human beings with the respect due to someone created in the divine image, those within the Jewish/Ger Toshav society

get slightly better treatment. They are handled above and beyond the letter of common human interaction.

There are those who point out these differences in treatment and wish to demonstrate that Judaism is anti-gentile. Quite the opposite. Judaism is one of the few religions that recognizes that even those outside its faith can be saved and allows them into its community. Righteous gentiles have a place in the world to come and can choose to join Jewish society if they wish. If they decline this invitation then they are given the full respect that these righteous people deserve. We shall show that the differences in treatment are reasonable and that all gentiles are treated honestly and respectfully.

Gentiles Are Human

The Accusation

Non-Jews are Not Human Baba Mezia 114a-114b. Only Jews are human ("Only ye are designated men").

The idea that only Jews are human and not gentiles runs contrary to a number of fundamental Jewish principles. According to the Talmud, gentiles **ARE** human and the complicated texts quoted to prove the accusation are misinterpreted, as we shall see.

The Texts

Talmud Bava Metzia 114b

ר״ש בן יוחאי אומר קברי עובדי כוכבים אינן מטמאין באהל שנא׳ ואתן צאני צאן מרעיתי אדם אתם אתם קרויין אדם ואין העובדי כוכבים קרויין אדם

Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: The graves of gentiles do not cause ritual impurity in a dwelling as it says (Ezekiel 34:31) "Now, you [Israel] are My sheep , the sheep of My pasture, you are Man (*Adam*)…" You [Israel, the subject of the verse] are called Man (*Adam*) and gentiles are not called Man (*Adam*).

Talmud Keritot 6b

הסך בשמן המשחה לבהמה וכלים פטור לעובד כוכבים ולמתים פטור בשלמא בהמה וכלים דכתיב על בשר אדם לא ייסך ובהמה וכלים לאו אדם הוא מתים נמי פטור דכיון דמית ליה מת מקרי ולאו אדם אלא עובדי כוכבים אמאי פטור הא אדם נינהו לאיי דכתיב ואתן צאני צאן מרעיתי אדם אתם אתם קרויין אדם ואין העובדי כוכבים קרויין אדם

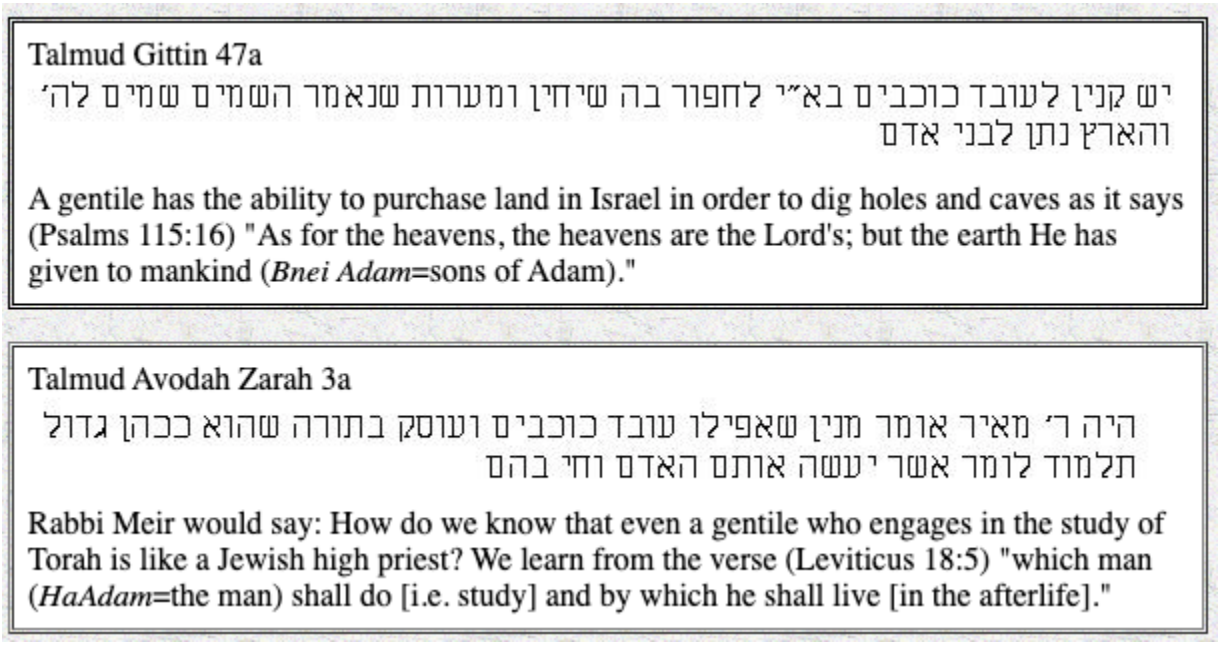
One who uses the official anointing oil [that has been consecrated] to smear on an animal or vessels is innocent of violating the holiness of the oil, to smear on gentiles or corpses is innocent. Certainly an animal and vessels as it say (Exodus 30:32) "It shall not be smeared on flesh of man (*Adam*)…" and an animal and vessels are not man. One who smears on corpses is also innocent since it is dead it is called a corpse and not a man. However, why is one who smears on gentiles innocent? They are men! No, as it says (Ezekiel 34:31) "Now, you [Israel] are My sheep , the sheep of My pasture, you are Man (*Adam*)…" You [Israel, the subject of the verse] are called Man (*Adam*) and gentiles are not called Man (*Adam*).

The relevance of the first passage is that causing ritual impurity in a dwelling is derived from Numbers 19: 14 "This is the teaching regarding a man (*Adam*) who would die in a tent…" Since the Talmud learns from Ezekiel that the term for man, *Adam*, only applies to Jews the verse regarding ritual impurity must also only refer to Jew who are called *Adam*.

Similarly, the second passage learns from Exodus 30:32 that only one who smears on a man (*Adam*) is liable. Since only Jews are called *Adam*, only one who smears on a Jew is liable.

There are those who infer from these passages that the Talmud considers gentiles to be sub-human. After all, if the Talmud says that gentiles are not called man they must be considered sub-human [for some reason the suggestion that they are super-human is never offered].

Here are two other passages which seem to contradict the above passage. After quoting them we will reconcile all of the passages and show that the Talmud does not consider gentiles to be sub-human.



Talmud Gittin 47a

יש קנין לעובד כוכבים באי״י לחפור בה שיחין ומערות שנאמר השמים שמים לה׳ והארץ נתן לבני אדם

A gentile has the ability to purchase land in Israel in order to dig holes and caves as it says (Psalms 115:16) "As for the heavens, the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to mankind (*Bnei Adam*=sons of Adam)."

Talmud Avodah Zarah 3a

היה ר׳ מאיר אומר מנין שאפילו עובד כוכבים ועוסק בתורה שהוא ככהן גדול תלמוד לומר אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם

Rabbi Meir would say: How do we know that even a gentile who engages in the study of Torah is like a Jewish high priest? We learn from the verse (Leviticus 18:5) "which man (*HaAdam*=the man) shall do [i.e. study] and by which he shall live [in the afterlife]."

We see from Gittin that the Talmud considers the phrase *Bnei Adam* (sons of man) to refer also to gentiles. We see from Avodah Zarah that the Talmud considers the term *HaAdam* (the man) to refer also to gentiles. Clearly, gentiles are considered human. Why then does the Talmud in Bava Metzia understand that gentiles are not considered *Adam* (man)?

The explanation is that these are different terms and only a superficial reading would render the term *Adam* in Bava Metzia as man. Gentiles are absolutely considered human as biology clearly dictates; there are no physiological differences between Jews and gentiles. All people are ultimately descended from the same ancestors, Noah and Adam.

However, the Jews, as a unified nation, are one organic entity. We are obligated to treat each other as close family members and are responsible for each other's actions.

When the Talmud sees the Hebrew word *Adam* it sees an allusion to Adam of Genesis 1-5 who was at one time the only person. The Talmud understands this as referring to the Jewish people who are an organic unit like one person. Gentiles do not have this organic national bond with each other and are therefore excluded from this concept.

Other terms referring to people, *Bnei Adam* (sons of Adam) or *HaAdam* (the man), are understood to refer to the species homo sapien of which gentiles are obviously members just as Jews are.

Thus, with regard to ritual impurity and holy oil, which are uniquely Jewish concepts, the Talmud sees an exclusion to all those who are not part of the organic Jewish nation. With regard to practical matters such as the purchase of land or individual matters such as spiritual status, gentiles are included. An understanding of **all** of the relevant passages in the Talmud shows that Gentiles are considered human but not Jewish and the accusations against the Talmud are false.

See also Tosafot Yevamot 61a s.v. Ve'Ein; Ra'avan #317; R. Israel Lifshitz, *Tiferet Yisrael* (Boaz), Avot 3:14; R. Tzvi Hirsch Chajes, *Hagahot Maharatz Chajes*, Yevamot 61a.

The Accusation

Yebamoth 98a. All gentile children are animals.

Berakoth 58a. In addition to having Elijah float down from heaven to deceive the gentile court, the Talmud teaches that gentiles are actually animals, hence Rabbi Shila (and Elijah) did not really lie at all. It also teaches that anyone (even a Jewish man) who reveals this Talmudic teaching about non-Jews deserves death, since revealing it makes gentiles wrathful and causes the repression of Judaism.

This is a complex issue and the following explanation will fully address the issue in great detail. What we will demonstrate is that the Talmud does not state anywhere that gentiles are animals. Both the passage in Yevamot and the story about Elijah are misrepresented by the accusation.

What the passages actually mean is that, due to the biblical prohibition against Jews marrying outside their religion, there is no legal standing to sexual relations between a Jew and a gentile. While this may seem offensive to some, it is the view of the Talmud.

Talmud Berachot 58a

ר׳ שילא נגדיה להההוא גברא דבעל ארמית. אזל אכל ביה קורציה בי מלכא. אמר
איכא חד גברא ביהודאי דקא דיין דינא בלא הרמנא דמלכא. שדר עליה פריסתקא.
כי אתא אמרי ליה מאי טעמא נגדתיה להאי. אמר להו דבא על חמרתא. אמרי ליה
אית לך סהדי אמר להו אין. אתא אליהו אדמי ליה כאינש ואסהיד. אמרי ליה אי
הכי בר קטלא הוא אמר להו אנן מיום דגלינן מארעין לית לן רשותא למקטל אתון
מאי דבעיתון עבידו ביה. עד דמעיינו ביה בדינא פתח ר׳ שילא ואמר לך ה׳
הגדולה והגבורה וגו׳. אמרי ליה מאי קאמרת אמר להו הכי קאמר ברוך רחמנא
דיהיב מלכותא בארעא כעין מלכותא דרקיעא ויהב לכו שולטנא ורחמי דינא.
אמרו חביבא עליה יקרא דמלכותא כולי האי יהבי ליה קילפא אמרו ליה דון דינא.
כי הוה נפיק אמר ליה ההוא גברא עבד רחמנא ניסא לשקרי. הכי אמר ליה רשע
לאו חמרי איקרו דכתיב אשר בשר חמורים בשרם. חזייה דקאזיל למימרא להו
דקרינהו חמרי אמר האי רודף הוא והתורה אמרה הבא להרגך השכם להרגו.
מחייה בקולפא וקטליה.

R. Shila administered lashes to a man who had intercourse with a gentile woman. The man went and informed on him to the government. He said: There is a Jewish man who holds court without royal appointment. The king sent an orderly to him [summoning him to appear]. When he came, they said to him: Why did you flog that man? [R. Shila] answered: Because he had relations with a donkey. They said to him: Do you have witnesses? He replied: Yes. Elijah came in the form of a man and testified. They said to him: If so, he is liable for death. [R. Shila] said: From the day we have been exiled from our land, we do not have permission to put someone to death. You can do whatever you want with him.

While they were analyzing his case, R. Shila began: (1 Chronicles 29:11) "Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the strength, the splendor,..." They said to him: What are you saying? He replied: This is what I am saying: Blessed is G-d who has given an earthly kingship similar to the heavenly Kingship and has given you dominion and made you merciful in judgement. They said to him: The honor of the government is so dear to you? They gave him a strap and appointed him as a judge.

When [R. Shila] left, the man [who was punished] said to him: Does G-d perform miracles for lies? He replied in this way: Wicked one, are they not called donkeys, as it says (Ezekiel 23:20) "whose flesh is the flesh of donkeys"? He saw that this man was going to inform on him [to the government] that he had called them donkeys. He said: This man is a pursuerand the Torah says that if someone comes to kill you, rise early and kill him first. He hit him with the strap and killed him.

There are a number of interesting points to be raised about this passage. However, first and foremost is the inference that has been drawn by some that

this passage states that gentiles are considered donnkeys by the Talmud. Reading through this passage, that seems like a correct inference. However, considering another passage that discuss this verse, it becomes clear that this is not the case at all. In fact, as we shall soon see, the Talmud actually states that possibility and quickly rejects it.

Let us first put this event into its proper historical context. Aaron Hyman [*Toldot Tannaim Ve'amoraim*, vol. 3 pp. 1111-1112] places this during the time of R. Shimon ben Gamaliel II which is early second century. Around fifty years earlier the Temple had been destroyed and large portions of the Jewish population brought to Rome and sold as slaves. The Jews were still persecuted due to the decrees of the emperor Trajan (reigned 98 to 117) and, when he died and Hadrian became his successor, Hadrian's early policy of tolerance was changed to one of persecution as well, some say due to Jewish informers who warned against giving Jews too much independence. In the year 114, the huge Jewish population of Alexandria was almost wiped out by rioting gentiles with the tacit approval of the Roman government. In the year 123, Hadrian forbade Jews from observing their Sabbath and circumcizing their sons [Mattis Kantor, *The Jewish Time Line Encyclopedia*, pp. 103-105]. These were dangerous and scary times for Jews. This difficult situation culminated in a revolt in the year 127. However, the events in our passage evidently precede the revolt.

The man in our passage had committed a religious offense and was being punished by a Jewish court. Having relations with anyone other than one's wife is forbidden under Jewish law, as is marrying a gentile [see Deut. 7:3; Ezra 9; Nehemiah 13:23-28]. This man had sinned and the court tried and convicted him for this offense. [Courts such as this no longer have the religious or secular authority to punish for such sins.] However, this court was not recognized by the Romans and had no authority to punish the man for religious crimes.

When R. Shila, who presided over the court of three judges, was summoned before the Roman authorities, he could have been killed for administering Jewish laws. Therefore, he claimed that the man had violated a Roman law and that the court was merely doing what any Roman court would have done. When the Romans decided to judge the case themselves, R. Shila realized that this man might be punished more harshly than his crime deserved. R. Shila then tricked the court to save this man's life by saying that the man had slept with a donkey. However, this statement was not an entire lie because there is a biblical verse in

which gentiles are compared to donkeys, particularly in respect to relations. Therefore, R. Shila could claim that he was speaking metaphorically and the court mistakenly understood him literally. Was he one hundred percent honest? No. However, he was dealing with a vicious government that was cruelly persecuting Jews. This turn of phrase saved a man's life. It was not, however, an outright lie. And that distinction is crucial in determining whether it was permitted or not, even during those dreadfully dangerous times.

Afterwards, this man was lacking in gratitude to R. Shila, although understandably since he had recently been flogged by him, and threatened to inform on him to the Roman government. This would have meant certain death for R. Shila, and possibly a massacre of thousands of Jews. Since this man was pursuing R. Shila -- he was trying to cause his death by informing on him to the Romans -- R. Shila had the right to save himself by killing this man first.

[The descent of Elijah is a fascinating example of the slow decrease in divine revelation that began with G-d speaking directly to man in the early biblical period, descended to G-d only speaking through a prophet, gradually reduced the clarity of prophecy until it was totally ended in Ezra's time. There still remained non-prophetic ways of G-d revealing himself to man. However, over centuries these too diminished until we are currently left with almost no way of knowing G-d's will except by looking to the past. R. Shila lived during the end of the last period of divine revelation and he was, therefore, still able to witness Elijah's descent from heaven. This, however, takes us well off topic and is best left for another time. Cf. R. Ya'akov Kaminetsky, *Emet LeYa'akov Al HaTorah*, Exodus 7:22]

While we have made the plausible contention that R. Shila did not mean this equation between gentiles and donkeys literally, and that those who claim he did are guilty of reading an historical episode overly literal, we have yet to prove our claim. The following passage, however, does that.

Talmud Berachot 25b, Shabbat 150a

אמר רב יהודה עכו"ם ערום אסור לקרות ק"ש כנגדו. מאי איריא עכו"ם אפילו ישראל נמי. ישראל פשיטא ליה דאסור אלא עכו"ם אצטריכא ליה מהו דתימא הואיל וכתיב בהו אשר בשר חמורים בשרם אימא כחמור בעלמא קמ"ל דאינהו נמי איקרו ערוה.

R. Yehudah said: It is forbidden to recite the Shema prayer in front of a naked gentile. Why [does he say] a gentile? [It is] also [forbidden in front of] a Jew. [In front of a Jew] is obvious that it is forbidden. However, in front of a gentile one might say that since it says (Ezekiel 23:20) "whose flesh is the flesh of donkeys" they are like donkeys, he came to teach us that they are also considered nakedness.

What we see here is a talmudic sage addressing exactly this issue. One might think that this verse teaches us that gentiles are like donkeys. Contrary to some claims, talmudic rabbis were very familiar with the Bible and knew about this verse in Ezekiel which, while stated regarding Egyptians, is generally understood as referring to all gentiles. Some might read this verse and understand it to mean that within Jewish law gentiles are considered as animals. Some might come to the conclusion that this verse means that gentiles are not really human and therefore their standing before us naked is like an animal standing before us naked and the ritual law forbidding prayer before a naked person is not applicable.

However, R. Yehudah teaches, that is not the case at all. Gentiles are people and not merely animals and the verse in Ezekiel does not mean that gentiles are animals. To understand the verse literally, the Talmud says, is to misunderstand the verse. Gentiles are unquestionably human, created in G-d's image, and Jewish law recognizes this as do the rabbis of the Talmud.

This verse is understood as implying that Jews and gentiles are maritally and sexually incompatible. The Bible tells us that it is forbidden for Jews to marry gentiles [see Deuteronomy 7:3; Ezra 9; Nehemiah 13:23-28]. While this certainly seems like a logical law since it would be very difficult for one spouse to fully observe the detailed Jewish religious laws while the other does not. It would also be difficult to raise fully observant children. The verse in Ezekiel, however, is coming to tell us that a Jew who marries or sleeps with a gentile, while violating a religious law, is not legally accomplishing anything. The marriage and/or relations has no legal standing and no divorce is necessary. Normally, when a married woman has an affair, the woman is forbidden both to return to her husband and to marry her lover after divorcing her husband. However, since

relations with a gentile have no legal standing, a woman who has an affair with a gentile can subsequently marry her lover (if he converts to Judaism). This is not because gentiles are not human or because they cannot have relations. It is because there is a legal incompatibility which makes marriage or relations with a gentile (while still forbidden) legally ineffective. [Cf. Tosafot, Ketuvot 3b sv. Velidrosh; R. Betzalel Ashkenazi, *Shitah Mekubetzet*, ibid. (particularly sv. Mihu)]

This is the message of the verse in Ezekiel. Just like relations with a donkey has no legal standing (except for the punishment for the act) and cannot cause marriage or separate lovers, so too relations with a gentile [Cf. R. Hershel Schachter, *Eretz HaTzvi*, p. 114]. Again, it is not because a gentile is considered a donkey. It is because in this legal dimension they are both in the same category. In every other dimension, particularly in the arena of interpersonal dynamics, gentiles are compatible with Jews. However, in the area of marriage, Jews and gentiles can never be married as recognized by Jewish law.

A corollary of this idea is that a Jew with gentile ancestry is not considered related to the gentile. Since, in Jewish law, gentile relations have no standing, the biological connection does not create a familial relation. This is mainly applicable to converts or children of intermarriages. While there is every reason to express gratitude and friendship with a biological relative, every convert to Judaism knows that he or she is breaking all familial ties by converting.

Yevamot 98a

אמר רבא הא דאמור רבנן אין אב למצרי לא תימא משום דשטופי בזימה דלא ידיע
אבל ידיע חיישינן אלא אפילו דידיע נמי לא חיישינן... ש"מ אפקורי אפקריה
רחמנא לזרעיה דכתיב אשר בשר חמורים בשרם.

Rava said: What the rabbis said, "There is no father of a gentile", do not say that it is because [gentiles] are immersed in licentiousness and do not know [who is whose father] but if one knew we would be cautious [and treat him like a father]. Rather, even if we know we are not cautious... we learn that G-d has freed his descendants, as it says (Ezekiel 23:20) "whose flesh is the flesh of donkeys."

A gentile who converts to Judaism no longer has a father [cf. Rashi, ad. loc., sv. Ha]. It is not, the Talmud is careful to point out, because we assume that gentiles are licentious and his biological father may not really be the man who impregnated his other. That is not the case. Rather, a Jew and a gentile are existentially separated by this chasm and the relations of a gentile has no legal standing regarding a Jew.

This is certainly a difficult concept to accept and it is understandable if gentiles might find it perplexing and maybe even offensive. However, it is not labelling gentiles as animals and that is important to point out. These passages can and have been misinterpreted as stating that the Talmud considers gentiles to be animals. That is absolutely false, as has already been demonstrated.

Proof that this is only talking about converts to Judaism and not about all gentiles, can be brought from Talmud Kiddushin 17b where it is stated that a gentile inherits from his father. If a gentile has no connection to his biological father, how can he inherit from him? Similarly, Talmud Yevamot 62a tells us that a gentile who has children, and thereby fulfills the blessing/commandment of "be fruitful and multiply", who subsequently converts to Judaism, is not obligated to have more children. Since he already fulfilled the blessing/commandment when he was a gentile he does not have to fulfill it again as a Jew [cf. Rashi, Yevamot ad. loc, sv. Bnei Noach]. If a gentile has no father, then how can a gentile man ever fulfill the blessing/commandment of "be fruitful and multiply"? His children will never be considered his. Rather, the above passages regarding the donkey are not discussing gentiles in general but only the specific cases mentioned above.

Cf. R. Chaim Soloveitchik, *Chiddushei R. Chaim HaLevy*, Issurei Biah 13:12; R. Elchanan Wasserman, *Kovetz He'arot*, 51:3.

Theft from Gentiles

The Accusation

Jews May Steal from Non-Jews, Baba Mezia 24a. (Affirmed also in Baba Kamma 113b).

The passage in Bava Metzia 24a does not deal with theft but with returning lost objects with which we will deal in a separate section. However, before we deal with Talmudic texts let us look at the conclusions drawn in post-Talmudic legal works.

Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law) Choshen Mishpat 348:2

כל הגונב אפי׳ כל שהוא עובר על לאו דלא תגנובו וחייב לשלם אחד הגונב ממון ישראל או הגונב ממון של עכו״ם

Anyone who steals even a minor amount violates the prohibition of [Leviticus 19:11] "You shall not steal" and is required to repay [the amount stolen] whether one steals from a Jew or a gentile.

Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 359:1

אסור לגזול או לעשוק אפי׳ כל שהוא בין מישראל בין מעכו״ם

It is forbidden to rob or to cheat even a minor amount from either a Jew or a gentile.

R. Shlomo Gantzfried, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (Abridged Code of Jewish Law), 182:1

אסור לגזול או לעשוק אפי׳ כל שהוא בין מישראל בין מעכו״ם

It is forbidden to rob or to steal even a minor amount from either a Jew or a gentile.

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Gezeilah 1:2

ואסור לגזול כל שהוא דין תורה אפילו עכו״ם אסור לגזלו או לעשקו ואם גזלו או עשקו יחזיר.

And it is biblically forbidden to steal even a minor amount; even a gentile - it is forbidden to steal from him or to cheat him. And if you stole from him or cheated him you must return the stolen money or object.

Sefer HaChinuch, 259

וכתב הרמב"ם זכרונו לברכה שאם שקר במדות אפילו לגוי עובד עבודה זרה עובר בלא תעשה וחייב להחזיר, וכן אסור להטעות הגוים בחשבון, שנאמר וחשב עם קונהו, אף על פי שהוא תחת ידיך, קל וחומר לגוי שאינו כבוש תחת ידיך, והרי הוא אומר כי תועבת ה' וגו' כל עושה עול, מכל מקום.

Maimonides of blessed memory wrote that if one lies in his measures and thereby overcharges even to an idolatrous gentile one violates a negative commandment and must return the money. Similarly, it is forbidden to mislead the gentiles in calculating prices as it says [Leviticus 25:50] "he shall make a reckoning with his purchaser" [see below] even if he is subjugated to your authority; even more so if the gentile is not subjugated to your authority and it says [Deuteronomy 25:16] "For an abomination to the Lord, you G-d, are all who do this."

Now that we have seen that it is unequivocally forbidden by Jewish law to steal from a gentile, let us visit the relevant Talmudic texts.

The Text

Talmud Bava Kamma 113a-b

וגזל כנעני מי שרי והתניא אמר ר' שמעון דבר זה דרש ר"ע כשבא מזפירין מנין לגזל כנעני שהוא אסור ת"ל אחרי נמכר גאולה תהיה לו שלא ימשכנו ויצא יכול יגלום עליו ת"ל וחשב עם קונהו ידקד עם קונהו... אלא אמר רבא לא קשיא כאן בגזילו וכאן בהפקעת הלוואתו

And who permits stealing from a gentile [which is implied in an earlier case]? Doesn't it say [in a baraita]: R. Shimon said that R. Akiva taught this when he came from Zephirin: From where do we know that theft from a gentile is forbidden [Leviticus 25:48] "After he [a Jew] has been sold [as a slave to a gentile] he shall have a redemption." We see from here that the Jewish court cannot take him away and he will leave his gentile owner. Maybe [after being redeemed the Jewish slave will go free and] the gentile will have to collect his money on his own - therefore it says [v. 50] "he shall make a reckoning with his purchaser" - he will be scrupulous with his purchaser… Rava said: There is no contradiction [between this teaching and the earlier case]. Here [in this teaching] we are speaking about theft and here [in the earlier case] we are speaking about annulling a loan.

There are a number of important points in this passage. First, we see that stealing from a gentile is undeniably forbidden. The Talmud emphasizes this by explaining a difficult verse in Leviticus. As we have seen, this passage has been accepted throughout the post-Talmudic literature. Another important point is that annulling a loan from a gentile is permitted. Normally, a loan is witnessed and documented to make it legally effective. When this is not done, a Jew is still obligated to take pity on his lender despite the lack of legal proof. Even though the lender was careless and neglected to properly document his business dealing, a Jew must go beyond the letter of the law and have mercy on his hapless colleague. However, this brotherly act need only extend to this

borrower's extended family. A Jew is only obligated to go beyond the letter of common business law for his Jewish brothers and cousins. Those who are not part of his extended family, part of his organic nation, are treated fairly and respectfully but do not receive the special treatment reserved for his family.

Going back to the prohibition of stealing from a gentile, there is a debate regarding this prohibition. Some scholars contend that this prohibition is biblical, as seems evident from the derivation from biblical verses [see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Geneivah 1:1, 7:8, Hilchot Gezeilah 1:1; R. Yechezkel Landau, *Noda BiYehudah* I Y"D 81; R. Yom Tov Algazi, *Hilchot Bechorot* 2:17; R. Chaim of Volozhin, *Responsa Chut Hameshulash*, 14, 17; R. Ephraim Navon, *Machaneh Ephraim*, Hilchot Gezeilah, 3; R. Yair Bachrach, *Chavot Yair*, 79; R. Tzvi Ashkenazi, *Chacham Tzvi*, 26]. Others believe that theft from gentiles is biblically permitted but the rabbis, using their own authority, prohibited this act for all Jews [see *Rashi*, Sanhedrin 57a; R. Nissim of Gerona, *Chiddushei HaRan*, Sanhedrin 57a]. However that may be, we see that Jewish law clearly forbids stealing from anyone whether Jew or gentile.

Tanna Devei Eliyahu 16

מעשה שמכרתי לעובד כוכבים אחד ארבעה כורין של תמרים ומדדתי לו בבית אפל מחצה
על מחצה. ואמר לי א-לקים על השמים ואתה יודע על מדה שאתה מודד לי. ומתוך
שמדדתי לו בבית אפל חסרתי לו שלשה סאין של תמרים. ולאחר כך נטלתי המעות
ולקחתי בהן כד אחד של שמן והנחתי אותו במקום שמכרתי התמרים לעובד כוכבים.
נקרע הכד ונשפך השמן והלך לו. אמרתי לו בני כתיב לא תעשק את רעך ולא תגזול וגו׳
רעך הרי הוא כאחיך ואחיך הרי הוא כרעך. הא למדת שגזל עובד כוכבים אסור כי גזל
הוא ואין צריך לומר גזל של אח.

I once sold to a gentile four korin [28 bushels] of dates and I measured it out evenly for him in a dark room. He said to me: G-d rules over the heavens and you know how much you measured for me. However, since I measured in a dark room I [accidentally] gave him three seahs [0.7 bushels] too little. After he paid me I purchased a jar of oil and placed it in the same place where I sold the dates to the gentile. The jar burst and the oil spilled out [as a divine punishment]. I said to him: My son, it says [Leviticus 19:13] "You shall not cheat your fellow and you shall not steal…" Your fellow is like your brother and your brother is like your fellow. You learn from here that it is forbidden to steal from a gentile because it is theft, and it need not be said that theft from your brother is forbidden.

Not only does Jewish law forbid theft from a gentile, the rabbis were particularly concerned about Jews appearing to be an unlawful people thereby defaming both the Jewish nation and their G-d. This sentiment is evident in the following passages.

Tosefta Bava Kamma 10:8

חמור גזל הנכרי מגזל ישראל מפני חילול השם.

It is worse to steal from a gentile than from a Jew because of desecration of [G-d's] name.

Jerusalem Talmud Bava Metzia 2:5 (7a)

ר׳ חנינה משתעי הדין עובדא רבנין סבייא זבנין חד כרי דחיטין מאילין דאיסאריס ואשכחון ביה חדא צררא דדינרי וחזרוניה להון אמרין בריך א-לההין דיהודאי.

R. Chaninah told this story: Some rabbinic scholars bought one pile of wheat from some gentile soldiers. [The scholars] found in it a bundle of money and returned it to [the soldiers]. [The soldiers] said "Blessed is the G-d of the Jews."

(Due to it being an old website, the Hebrew Text is lost so I brought it here.)
Midrash Devarim Rabbah 3:3:

מַעֲשֶׂה בְּרַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן שֶׁטַח שֶׁלָּקַח חֲמוֹר אֶחָד מִיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִי אֶחָד, הָלְכוּ תַּלְמִידָיו וּמָצְאוּ בּוֹ אֶבֶן אַחַת טוֹבָה תְּלוּיָה לוֹ בְּצַוָּארוֹ, אָמְרוּ לוֹ, רַבִּי, (משלי י, כב): בִּרְכַּת ה' הִיא תַּעֲשִׁיר, אָמַר לָהֶן רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן שֶׁטַח, חֲמוֹר לָקַחְתִּי אֶבֶן טוֹבָה לֹא לָקַחְתִּי, הָלַךְ וְהֶחֱזִירָהּ לְאוֹתוֹ יִשְׁמְעֵאלִי, וְקָרָא עָלָיו אוֹתוֹ יִשְׁמְעֵאלִי בָּרוּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן שֶׁטַח

Once, Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach bought a donkey from an Arab. His students went and found a precious stone hanging around [the donkey's] neck. Rabbi said to him [Proverbs 10:22] "It is the blessing of G-d that enriches." R. Shimon ben Shetach said to him "I bought a donkey. I did not buy a precious stone." He went and returned it to the Arab and the Arab said "Blessed is the G-d of Shimon ben Shetach."

Jerusalem Talmud Bava Metzia 2:5 (7a)

ר׳ שמואל בר סוסטריי סלק לרומי אובדת מלכא דילנית דידה ואשכחיה. אפקת כרוז במדינתא מאן דמחזר לה בגו שלשים יומין יסב אכן ואכן, בתר ל׳ יומין איתרים רישיה. לא חזריה גו ל׳ יומין, בתר ל׳ יומין חזריה. אמרה ליה לא היית במדינתא אמר לה אין. אמרה ליה ולא שמעת קלא דכרוזא אמר לה אין. אמרה ליה ומה מר אמר לה מאן דמחזיר לה גו שלשים יומין יסב אכן ואכן, בתר שלשים יומין יתרים רישיה. אמרה ליה ולמה לא חזרתוניה גו ל׳ יומין אמר לה דלא תימרון בגין דחלתיך עבדית אלא בגין דחלתיה דרחמנא. אמרה ליה ברוך א-לקון דיהודאי.

R. Shmuel ben Sustrai went to Rome when the empress had lost her bracelet and he found it. A decree was proclaimed in the region that anyone who returned it within 30 days would be paid such and such; anyone who returned it after 30 days would be beheaded. He didn't return it within 30 days but after 30 days. She said to him "Weren't you in the region?" He replied "Yes." She said to him "Didn't you hear the proclamation?" He replied "Yes." She said to him "What was it?" He replied "Whoever returns it within 30 days will receive such and such; whoever returns it after 30 days will be beheaded." She said to him "And why didn't you return it within 30 days?" He replied "So that you wouldn't say that I did it because of fear of you; rather I did it out of fear of G-d." She said to him "Blessed is the G-d of the Jews."

Paying Gentiles' Wages

> **The Accusation**
> O.K. to Cheat Non-Jews, Sanhedrin 57a . A Jew need not pay a Gentile ("Cuthean") the wages owed him for work.

(This quote took forever to find and I wish the Hebrew was there LOL.)

Talmud Sanhedrin 57a:
– אֶלָּא, אָמַר רַב אַחָא בְּרֵיהּ דְּרַב אִיקָא: לֹא נִצְרְכָה אֶלָּא לְכוּתִי שָׁכַר שָׂכִיר. גּוֹי בְּגוֹי וְגוֹי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אָסוּר; יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגוֹי – מוּתָּר.
Rather this is referring to holding back a worker's wages [Leviticus 19:13]: A Cuthean to a Cuthean and a Cuthean to a Jew is forbidden; a Jew to a Cuthean is permitted.

Before discussing this particular passage from the Talmud it is important to note that the commandments regarding not withholding a worker's wages [see below] **DO NOT** touch upon the issue of whether a worker is paid; they deal solely with **WHEN** a worker is paid. The commandments specify that a worker must be paid within that day/night period and that the employer is prohibited from delaying payment. For example, a babysitter who watches children at night must be paid before sunrise of the next day. Similarly, a shoemaker who gives you your shoes during the day must be paid before sunset of that day (Talmud Bava Metzia 110b; R. Yisrael Meir HaCohen Kagan, *Ahavat Chesed*, 1:9:1-2). Even without these commandments, or if the time period has expired, a worker must still receive his wages. If not, the employer is guilty of theft (Talmud Bava Metzia 111a; *Ahavat Chesed*, 1:10:14). These commandments only determine **WHEN** an employee must be paid.

However, these only apply to a worker who has been too careless to pre-arrange a payment schedule. If a shoemaker states, or it is assumed, that he must be paid on delivery of the shoes then the commandments do not apply and he must be paid as arranged (*Ahavat Chesed*, 1:9:12). These commandments dictate that an employer should go beyond the legalities of a worker's agreement and take extra care of a neglectful or economically unempowered employee.

With that in mind, let us examine the relevant Talmudic passages. The above passage clearly states that the biblical prohibition against holding back a worker's wages during the night/day period following employment does not apply to Cutheans.

Who are the Cutheans? In 2 Kings 17:24-41 we are told that they were displaced by Assyrians from Babylonia to Israel and converted to Judaism out of fear of natural disaster. Regardless of their original intention, the Talmud considers them to have eventually become believing Jews [Tosafot Ketuvot 29a s.v. Ve'al]. However, in later Talmudic times they became a community of idolaters [Talmud Chullin 6a]. Because of their transgressions they were no longer treated as part of the Jewish community. In general, the Talmud uses the term Cuthean to refer to any idolaters, whether Jewish or gentile.

We therefore see that the Talmud states that the commandments prohibiting holding back a worker's wages do not apply to idolaters, Jewish or gentile. What remains unstated in this passage but is implicit in other passages is that an employer must still pay an idolater his fair wages. He only need not go the extra mile and pay him immediately if there was no pre-arranged payment schedule.

Talmud Geirim 3:2

And one transgresses with him [a righteous gentile] the prohibitions of aggrieving [Leviticus 25:17], of cheating [Leviticus 19:13], and of the sun not setting upon him [without paying his wages - Deuteronomy 24:15]. {For exact wording of text see Nachalat Ya'akov}

Jerusalem Talmud Yevamot 8:1 (44b)

As we teach a Ger Toshav (righteous gentile) falls under the prohibition of aggrieving [Leviticus 25:17] - these are the words of Rabbi Yossi the son of Rabbi Yehudah

Mishnah Bava Metzia 111a

A Ger Toshav (righteous gentile) falls under the prohibition of "On that day you shall pay his wages" [Deuteronomy 24:15].

What we see unequivocally from the above passages is that the Talmud is not distinguishing between Jew and gentile regarding paying wages. Rather it is distinguishing between monotheist and idolater. The Torah requires maintaining an orderly society with debtors paying creditors and employers paying workers as pre-arranged. However, those are part of the Jewish/Ger Toshav society receive treatment beyond reasonable expectations and have provisions in case of negligence. Nowhere are gentiles discriminated against and even idolaters maintain their basic right to be paid for their labor.

It seems to me that R. Gil Student made a mistake. I am a mere 21 year old Chabad guy, soooo lol what do I know. But the passage in 57a doesn't seem to be discussing a Cuthean. In search of the truth I found on Halachipedia about delaying pay. Seemingly, the biblical commandment for paying your worker on time doesn't apply to non-Jews. However, it is forbidden to not pay. The question at hand is really if you ought to pay on time. There seems to be leniency with regards to paying on the pay-day exactly. This isn't to say you can not pay your non-Jewish worker, nor should one delay in doing so. It's a graver offense technically due to the commandment of not desecrating G-d's name. Also, as for a non-Jew here, the same rules apply to a heretical Jew, an idol-worshipper and the like. It should be noted that in any regards stealing from a non-Jew is a biblical sin.

Oh, also, I'm sorry for not bringing the Hebrew for the above three passages. It's late and I really want to finish this. I realized at this point it's unnecessary - it's just the same as the English but… in HEBREW? *Gasp*! Shocker, I know. You could check it up in Sefaria if you want.

Cheating Gentiles is Forbidden

The Accusation

O.K. to Cheat Non-Jews, Sanhedrin 57a .

This is perhaps one of the worst lies stated. The Talmud and post-Talmudic literature absolutely and unequivocally forbid lying to **anyone**, whether Jew or gentile. It is forbidden to cheat or to profit from lying. Consider the following passage:

Talmud Chullin 94a

דאמר שמואל אסור לגנוב דעת הבריות ואפילו דעתו של עובד כוכבים.

As Shmuel said: It is forbidden to deceive anyone, even an idolatrous gentile.

This statement is affirmed in Maimonides' famous legal work the *Mishneh Torah* (Hilchot Deiot 2:6) and in the *Shulchan Aruch* (code of law - Choshen Mishpat 228:6). The concept is evident throughout Jewish literature. A few other places where it can be found as law are: Rabbi Yom Tov ben Avraham Alashbili, *Chiddushei HaRitva*, Chullin ad. loc.; Rabbi Yehudah HaChasid, *Sefer Chasidim*, 51; Rabbi Eliezer from Metz, *Sefer Yerei'im*, 124; Rabbi Elazar Azkiri, *Sefer Chareidim*, 29:20; Rabbi Yehudah Rosannes, *Derech Pekudecha*, 2:36:2; Rabbi Moshe from Coucy, *Sefer Mitzvot HaGadol (Smag)*, 1:74, 2:155; Rabbi Yonah from Gerona, *Sha'arei Teshuvah (Gates of Repentance)*, 3:184; Rabbi Shmuel Eidels, *Chiddushei Maharsha - Chiddushei Aggadot*, Chullin ad. loc.

There is, perhaps, no clearer denunciation than the following of Maimonides in his commentary to the Mishnah:

Maimonides, *Commentary to the Mishnah*, Keilim 12:7

וכן אינו מותר הבדוי והתחבולה ומיני הרמאות והאונאות והעקיפין על העכו"ם, אמרו אסור לגנוב דעת הבריות ואפילו דעתו של עובד כוכבים, וכ"ש בדבר שיוכל לבא לידי חילול השם, שזה חטא גדול והגעה לאדם תכונות רעות, ואלו הרעות כולן אשר ביאר השי"ת שהוא יתעב אותם ויתעב עושם אמר כי תועבת ה' כל עושה אלה.

And similiarly, lies, tricks, subterfuges, cheatings, and circumventions of gentiles are forbidden. They said [as quoted above] 'It is forbidden to deceive anyone, even an idolatrous gentile' and even more so when it can lead to the desecration of G-d's name. For that is a great sin and imbues in a person bad traits. And all these wicked actions G-d explained that He will be disgusted with them and with those who perform them, as it says: (Deuteronomy 18:12) "For anyone who does these is an abomination of G-d."

With this in mind, let us approach the text in question.

Talmud Bava Kamma 113b

אמר שמואל טעותו מותרת כי הא דשמואל זבן מכותי לקנא דדהבא במר דפרזלא בד׳ זוזי
ואבלע ליה חד זוזא.

Shmuel said: Their mistakes are permitted. Like when Shmuel bought from a gentile a golden bowl (with the seller thinking it was bronze) for four zuz and accidentally paid him one zuz less.

The Talmud is not stating that it is permissible to cheat a gentile. We saw above that the Talmud specifically forbids that. What the Talmud is saying is that normal business relations is for each party of a transaction to be responsible for their side of the deal. If Shmuel found a cheap bowl and, after accidentally underpaying, the seller did not count his money, then Shmuel was not obligated to correct the seller. The seller was negligent and Shmuel did not have to correct his mistake. For one's brothers and relatives one must go beyond the standard practice of business relations and correct all mistakes - return lost change, explain all misunderstandings, etc. However, for a business relation with whom there is mutual respect and understanding but nothing more, one conducts business by following convention.

In case the preceding has been unclear, let me restate it. A Jew is not obligated to correct a gentile's business mistakes. The Jew may not trick the gentile but if the gentile has been careless then the sale is nevertheless valid.

The following are just a few sources who state explicitly that the Talmud was only referring to accidental mistakes: Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Geneivah 7:8; Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi, *Mordechai*, end of Bava Batra; *Chinuch*, 258; Rabbi Shlomo Luriah, *Yam Shel Shlomo*, Bava Kamma 10:20; Rabbi Ephraim Navon, *Machaneh Ephraim*, Hilchot Gezeilah 4; Rabbi Yehoshua Falk, *Sefer Me'irat Einayim*, to *Shulchan Aruch*, Choshen Mishpat 283:6, 359:3.

(One thing Rabbi Gil doesn’t say, as he’s just destroying these slanderous remarks with actual quotes - is logical rebuttals without sources. Therefore, if it comes to one’s mind that this entire thing is somehow a PR stunt, and they’re too lazy to learn Hebrew or Judeo-Aramaic to figure out the truth themselves, then I have but one thing to say and we’ll get personal. I am a 21 year old free-thinking adult. I can legally buy alcohol in America (wooo-hoo!) Anyways, presume my religion allows me to lie. Why would I follow it? Genuinely curious what the thought process is. The Torah says

very clearly that lying is an abomination [Proverbs 12:22], to stray from falsehood [Proverbs 30:8-9, Exodus 23:7], why would I subscribe to a faith so blatantly contradictory? Ah yes! Because these verses clearly only refer to Jew on Jew, but to a nonJew? Lie as much as possible! For sure! If you can't tell, that was sarcasm. It's ideological to assume this and create such a paradox. Also, I test any Jew hater to go to a synagogue and pose as a Jew. Yeah, I'm telling you to lie. If you think Jews can lie, then you probably would be okay with lying to a rabbi. Lie to him, tell him you're from Florida or somewhere visiting. Then afterwards strike a conversation with him. Then in it you can very simply ask him "Hey Rabbi, random question - so I heard some anti-semite say we could lie to nonJews, is this true?". Guess what you just did? You just cracked the code to solve this paradox. The rabbi thinking you're a Jew cannot lie to you.)

Killing Gentiles is Forbidden

The Accusation

Jews May Rob and Kill Non-Jews, Sanhedrin 57a . When a Jew murders a Gentile ("Cuthean"), there will be no death penalty. What a Jew steals from a Gentile he may keep.

Minor Tractates. Soferim 15, Rule 10. This is the saying of Rabbi Simon ben Yohai: *Tob shebe goyyim harog* ("Even the best of the gentiles should all be killed").

Robbing gentiles is absolutely forbidden and is dealt with in a separate section. Here we will demonstrate that in no way does the Talmud permit or encourage killing gentiles. Rather, it strictly forbids killing anyone, Jew or gentile.

The Text

Talmud Sofrim 15:10

תני ר״ש בן יוחאי הטוב שבגויים הרוג

R. Shimon ben Yochai taught: Kill [even] the good among the gentiles.

While this passage seems to advocate the genocide of all non-Jews, it must be remembered that this is a single passage extracted from a thorough study. Without seeing it in its original context, a simple reading is both incorrect and unsound scholarship. Let us look at the full original passage as recorded in a number of places.

The original teaching is as part of a study of the book of Exodus. At this point, the Jews have left Egypt but have not yet crossed the Sea of Reeds. The Egyptian people, after suffering through ten long and difficult plagues, have decided to pursue the Jewish people rather than let them go.

Mechilta, Beshalach 2 (on Exodus 14:7)

ויקח שש מאות רכב. משל מי היו הבהמות שהיו טוענין המרכבות. אם תאמר משל מצרים היו והלא כבר נאמר וימת כל מקנה מצרים. ואם תאמר משל פרעה היו והלא כבר נאמר הנה יד ה׳ הויה במקנך אשר בשדה. ואם תאמר משל ישראל והלא כבר נאמר וגם מקננו ילך עמנו ולא תשאר פרסה. אלא של מי היו של שלא הירא את דבר ה׳. נמצינו למדין המקנה שהניס הירא את דבר ה׳ הם היו תקלה לישראל. מכאן היה ר׳ שמעון אומר טוב שבגויים הרוג.

[Exodus 14:5-7 "It was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled; and the heart of Pharoah and his servants became transformed regarding the people, and they said, 'What is this that we have done that we have sent away Israel from serving us?' He harnessed his chariot and attracted his people with him.] **He took six hundred elite chariots** [and all the chariots of Egypt, with officers on them all."]

From whom were the animals that drove the chariots? If you say they were from Egypt, doesn't it say (Exodus 9:6) "and all the livestock of Egypt died [from the fifth plague]"? If you say they were from Pharoah, doesn't it say (Exodus 9:3) "[Moses said to Pharoah]: Behold, the hand of G-d is on your livestock that are in the field"? If you say they were from the Jews, doesn't it say (Exodus 10:26) "And our livestock, as well, will go with us- not a hoof will be left"? Rather from whom were they, from the Egyptians who feared G-d [and were not affected by the plagues]. We now see that the livestock of the G-d-fearers that escaped the plague caused great hardship for the Jews [by being used for chariots to pursue them]. From here R. Shimon [ben Yochai] said: Kill [even] the good among the gentiles.

From the above teaching we see that R. Shimon ben Yochai was discussing a case of war. The G-d-fearers among the Egyptians allowed their animals to be used in battle against the Jews. Presumably, these people went along with their animals and drove the chariots. We now see that the G-d-fearers, the "good" among the gentiles, were doing battle with the Jews. To this R. Shimon ben Yochai said that, when in battle, do not try to spare the lives of those opposing soldiers who are fine, upstanding people. Kill any enemy soldier, regardless of their character. This contextual approach to understanding R. Shimon ben Yochai's statement is how the post-Talmudic literature has read this statement [see Tosafot, Avodah Zarah 26b sv Velo; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Avodah Zarah 10:1]. Reading R. Shimon ben Yochai's teaching as a single-sentence imperative to kill all gentiles is simply wrong and is not how Jewish scholars have ever understood it.

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Rotze'ach 2:11 and the commentary of R. Yosef Karo, *Kessef Mishneh*

ישראל שהרג גר תושב אינו נהרג עליו בבית דין שנאמר וכי יזיד איש על רעהו
ואין צריך לומר שאינו נהרג על הגוי.

והוא שכתב רבינו אינו נהרג עליה בב"ד כלומר אבל נהרג בדיני שמים חייב.

A Jew who killed a righteous gentile is not executed in a court of law as it says (Exodus 21:14) "If a man shall act intentionall against his fellow..." [and a gentile is not considered a fellow] and even more so that he is not executed for killing an unrighteous gentile.

What our teacher Maimonides meant when he wrote that he is not executed in a court of law is that he is nevertheless punished by Heaven.

The above passage in Maimonides shows that there is a discrepancy between the treatment of a murderer of a Jew and a gentile. The Bible says that a murderer is only executed if he kills his "fellow" and by being parts of very different communities a gentile is not the "fellow" of a Jew. Is this murder forbidden? Absolutely. However, biblical fiat declares that this murder is not a capital punishment. However, rather than allowing this murderer to receive a minor punishment, his punishment is left to Divine providence. G-d will punish this sin appropriately because it is out of the court's hands.

While it is understandable that Jewish literature has been relatively quiet about something as obvious as the prohibition against killing gentiles, the following sources are just some of those who say it explicitly: Tosafot, Avodah Zarah 26b sv. Velo; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Rotze'ach 2:11, Hilchot Avodah Zarah 10:1; R. Yoel Sirkes, *Bayit Chadash*, Yoreah Deah 158; *Taz*, Yoreh Deah 158:1; *Beit Meir*, Even HaEzer 17:3; R. Yosef Babad, *Minchat Chinuch*, 93:2; R. Avraham Yishayahu Karelitz, *Chazon Ish*, Bava Kamma 10:16.

(R. Gil says Jewish literature has been relatively quiet, yeah I don’t get what he means by “relatively”, he just brought many sources proving killing a nonJew is a grave sin. It’s not hush hush, it’s quite obvious that it’s forbidden from killing.)

Various Accusations

The Accusation

Moed Kattan 17a . If a Jew is tempted to do evil he should go to a city where he is not known and do the evil there.

The Text

Talmud Moed Kattan 17a

ר' אילעי אומר אם רואה אדם שיצרו מתגבר עליו ילך למקום שאין מכירין אותו וילבש שחורים ויתעטף שחורים ויעשה מה שלבו חפץ ואל יתחלל שם שמים בפרהסיא.

Rabbi Ila'i said: If a person is tempted to do evil he should go to a city where he is not known, dress in black clothes, cover his head in black, and do what his heart desires so that G-d's name will not be desecrated.

Note the part of the passage that is not quoted in the accusation. The accusers do not mention that this **person** (not necessarily a Jew) must dress in black and cover his head. Why should this be if the Talmud is offering advice on how to commit a crime? Quite the opposite, this person should try to blend in with everyone else. Rather the Talmud is offering very sound psychological advice. This person is not directly told "You can't do it." That advice to a person steeped in desire is meaningless because the person has lost control of his actions. Rather, the person is bidden to first **delay** his intended actions by going to a city where he is not known. This lengthy trip will serve as a cooling off period. He is then told to dress humbly which should further serve as a reminder of what he should be doing compared to what he plans on doing. Rather than offering carte blanche permission to sin, the Talmud is suggesting a form of indirect rebuke to prevent the person from sinning [see Rashi in the name of Rav Hai Gaon and Chiddushei HaRan; Tosafot, Kiddushin 40a]. The desecration of G-d's name is a subterfuge to convince this sick individual to follow the path to health.

The Accusation

Yebhamot 11b: "Sexual intercourse with a little girl is permitted if she is three years of age."

Aboda Sarah 37a: "A gentile girl who is three years old can be violated."

The Text

Talmud Ketuvot 11b (The citation mentioned is evidently in error. Talmud Yevamot 11b has no relevant passage)

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב קטן הבא על הגדולה עשאה מוכת עץ... אמר רבא הכי קאמר גדול הבא על הקטנה ולא כלום דפחות מכאן כנותן אצבעו בעין דמי.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: A male child who has relations with a female adult causes her to be like one who was injured with a stick... Rava said: This is what was meant - an adult male who has relations with a female child has not done anything because less than this [three years old] is like sticking a finger into an eyeball.

While those unused to these Talmudic discussions might be taken aback by the use of euphemisms, the discussion here relates to the dowry for virgins and non-virgins. A virgin receives a higher dowry. While the tell-tale sign of virginity is the release of blood due to the breaking of the hyman on the wedding night, there are occasions when the hyman has already been broken such as when the woman suffered an injury. The Talmud here adds that a sexual act with a male minor is not considered to be a loss of virginity because one of the participants is not fully active. While the female's hyman may have been broken, she has not engaged in what can be classified as a sexual act (although it is certainly child abuse).

The Talmud continues that a sexual act between a male adult and a female under the age of three is also not considered a loss of virginity (although it is child abuse). Since the girl is too young for her hymen to be broken, she is still considered a virgin.

Nowhere is the Talmud permitting such behavior. Sex outside of a marriage is strictly forbidden (Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Ishut 1:4, Hilchot Na'arah Betulah 2:17; *Shulchan Aruch*, Even HaEzer 26:1, 177:5) as is this obvious case of child abuse. The Talmud is only discussing ex post facto what would happen if such a case arose.

The same usage occurs in the passage in Talmud Avodah Zarah 37a. The Talmud states that at the age of three a girl is **capable** of participating in a sexual act. However, that act is not permissible. See also Jerusalem Talmud Ketuvot 1:2 (4b).

The Accusation

Sanhedrin 59a: "A goy (Gentile) who pries into The Law (Talmud) is guilty of death."

The Text

Talmud Sanhedrin 59a

ואמר ר' יוחנן עובד כוכבים שעוסק בתורה חייב מיתה שנאמר תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה
לנו מורשה ולא להם... ר"מ אומר מניין שאפילו עובד כוכבים ועוסק בתורה שהוא ככהן
גדול שנאמר אשר יעשה האדם וחי בהם כהנים לויים וישראלים לא נאמר אלא האדם הא
למדת שאפילו עובד כוכבים ועוסק בתורה הרי הוא ככהן גדול.

Rabbi Yochanan said: A gentile who studies Torah is liable for death as it says (Deuteronomy 33:4) "Moses commanded us Torah as a heritage." It is a heritage for us and not for them... Rabbi Meir would say: How do we know that even a gentile who engages in the study of Torah is like a Jewish high priest? As it says (Leviticus 18:5) "Which man shall do [i.e. study] and by which he shall live [in the afterlife]." It does not say "priests, Levites, and Israelites" but "man". We learn from here that even a gentile who engages in the study of Torah is like a Jewish high priest. [We answer the contradiction between Rabbi Yochanan's statement and Rabbi Meir's that] there [Rabbi Meir] is referring to their seven commandments.

The Talmud provides a contradiction between two statements regarding whether a gentile is allowed to study Torah. The accusation only quotes one side and does not provide the resolution. By seeing the whole text and the resolution we can better understand the Talmud's intent.

What the accusation also does not quote is the passage immediately preceding ours. The Talmud states that it is forbidden for a gentile to fully observe the Jewish Sabbath and holidays. While this does not seem as conspiratorial as the prohibition against studying Torah it is still curious. Why should it be? The explanation is tied to the Talmud's resolution to the contradiction between Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Meir. The Talmud concludes that both rabbis agree but one was stating that a gentile is forbidden to study the parts of Torah that discuss the commandments relating specifically to Jews and the other was stating that a gentile is highly praised for studying the parts of Torah that discuss the commandments that relate to him. In other words, a gentile should be concerned with his role in G-d's world. He should actively pursue his place in the divine plan and attempt to raise himself to the highest human levels. However, as a righteous gentile, he must confine himself to **HIS** role and not someone else's role. When he starts studying about Jewish commandments and observing Jewish holidays, he is stepping out of his role as a righteous gentile and entering

the role of a Jew. This is as inappropriate as if a Jew would start acting in the role of a righteous gentile. We all have our roles in the world and it is wrong to try to side-step those roles. A gentile can become a Jew through conversion but a righteous gentile is righteous in his own right and is forbidden to try to over-step his role.

It should be noted, the Alter Rebbe states in Shulchan Aruch in such a case it's punishable by the Hands of Heaven - which basically means it's up to G-d Almighty to decide if what you're learning is useless. We value time, albeit we all waste it - Jews for example must constantly be stating words of Torah. Do we? Nah we suck at fulfilling that. G-d is merciful and understanding. I haven't read all of which I copy pasted, but the caveats to capital punishment in Judaism basically equate to "yeah bad thing don't do it." Rather than actually bringing down capital punishment. So rather than reading it literally in any case that one is deserving of death, rather reflect on the profound message - this thing one ought not to do. It's better not to waste time and delve into the things practical to you.

The Accusation

Talmud Erubin 21b. Whosoever disobeys the rabbis deserves death and will be punished by being boiled in hot excrement in Hell.

The Text

Talmud Eruvin 21b

ולהג הרבה יגיעת בשר א"ר פפא בריה דרב אחא בר אדא משמיה דרב אחא בר עולא מלמד שכל המלעיג על דברי חכמים נידון בצואה רותחת. מתקיף לה רבא מי כתיב לעג להג כתיב אלא כל ההוגה בהן טועם טעם בשר.

(Ecclesiastes 12:12) "And extensive study (*lahag*) is physically exhausting." Rav Papa bar Rav Acha bar Ada said in the name of Rav Acha bar Ula: This teaches that everyone who mocks (*mal'ig*) the words of the sages will be punished in burning excrement. Rava attacked: It does not say *la'ag* but *lahag*. Rather, whoever studies (*hogeh*) them will taste delectable meat.

The accusation crucially mistranslates "mocks" as "disobeys" which changes the meaning of the passage. The accusation also neglects to point out that the statement is disproven by Rava. However, the point still remains that, as

demanded in Deuteronomy 17:8-13, Jews must follow the rulings of their judges i.e. the rabbis.

Introduction to Christianity in The Talmud

There are many talmudic passages that are alleged to be referring to Jesus. However, talmudic scholars and historians have long debated whether these passages are actually about Jesus. The evidence is very unclear. We will show the passages that are discussed and offer some historical theories to explain them. Some of the passages we will examine do not even mention a name close to Jesus'. Others contain stories and names similar to Jesus'. What we will do is examine these passages, offer different theories to explain them, and point out the problems with these theories. We hope that we will be able to show to anyone with an open mind that there can be no consensus over whether the Talmud ever mentions Jesus.

One of the reasons that some approach this topic is to prove that the talmudic rabbis were blasphemers of the Christian religion. In order to avoid this bias, let us stipulate up front that the sages of the talmud were indeed blasphemers of the Christian religion. None of them believed that Jesus was the messiah or the son of G-d. In fact, they believed that in claiming so he was a false prophet. They did not believe that he was born through a virgin birth; he was either the son of his mother and her husband or his mother and someone else. If they did believe in these concepts then they would be Christians. But they did not and were not. If you choose to label all non-Christians as blasphemers that is your prerogative.

We have divided the passages into three categories - those that are alleged to discuss Jesus in general or refer to him in passing, those that give a narrative of Jesus's life, and those that refer to Christianity.

Jesus in the Talmud

The Accusation

Insults Against Blessed Mary, Sanhedrin 106a . Says Jesus' mother was a whore: "She who was the descendant of princes and governors played the harlot with carpenters." Also in footnote #2 to Shabbath 104b it is stated that in the "uncensored" text of the Talmud it is written that Jesus mother, "Miriam the hairdresser," had sex with many men.

"Jesus was a bastard born of adultery." (Yebamoth 49b, p.324).
"Mary was a whore: Jesus (Balaam) was an evil man." (Sanhedrin 106a &b, p.725).
"Jesus was a magician and a fool. Mary was an adulteress". (Shabbath 104b, p.504).

The reference to Shabbat 104b will be taken up in the section on the Jesus narrative.

The Text

Mishnah Yevamot 4:18

אמר ר׳ שמעון בן עזאי מצאתי מגלת יוחסין בירושלים וכתוב בה איש פלוני ממזר מאשת איש.

R. Shimon ben Azzai said: I found a book of geneologies in Jerusalem and in it is written "The man Plony is a bastard."

This is claimed to be a reference to Jesus. However, this claim is patently ridiculous. The Mishnah was most likely referring to a famous person and, due to the lack of any practical ramifications, his name was left out by the compilers of the Mishnah. Plony is a biblical term used similar to John Doe today (cf. Ruth 4:1). The keeping of genealogical records was very common in talmudic times so that regular Jews did not marry bastards and violate the biblical prohibition (Deuteronomy 23:3). Investigations into lineage and proclamations of bastardy were not uncommon (cf. Nehemiah 7:5; Talmud Kiddushin 70b-71a). There is no reason to assume that this refers to Jesus.

Gustaf Dalman rejects the assertion that this Mishnah refers to Jesus [Dalman, *Die Worte Jesus* (Liepzig: Hinrichs, 1898), p. 4 n. 2]. Similarly, RT Herford calls this suggestion "doubtful and probably unfounded" [Herford, "Jesus in Rabbinical Literature", *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 6 pp. 87-88]. Johann Maier calls it "odd speculation" [Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Uberlieferung*, p. 50]. All of this is cited approvingly by John P. Meier in his highly acclaimed *A Marginal Jew*, vol. I p. 108 n. 53. See also Avraham Korman's discussion in *Zeramim Vekitot Beyahadut*, pp. 348-349.

The Text
Sanhedrin 106a

אמר ר' יוחנן בתחלה נביא ולבסוף קוסם. אמר ר' פפא היינו דאמרי אינשי מסגני
ושליטי הואי אייזן לגברי נגרי.

R. Yochanan said (regarding Balaam): In the beginning a prophet, in the end a sorcerer. Rav Papa said: As people say, "She was the descendant of princes and rulers, she played the harlot with carpenters."

Here we come to the common distortion that references in the talmud to Balaam are really veiled references to Jesus. As we shall soon see, Balaam is not a talmudic codeword for Jesus. Therefore, the passage above is referring solely to Balaam and not to Jesus. Besides this fact, read the passage closely and you will see that Rav Papa is offering a parable that explains R. Yochanan's statement. It is impossible to read R. Yochanan's statement as referring to Jesus and Rav Papa's as referring to Jesus' mother.

R. Yochanan is saying that Balaam had tremendous potential and started out as a true prophet of G-d. However, he turned to evil and in the end of his life became a sorcerer (i.e. user of black magic). This tradition regarding Balaam's descent was also recorded in the Tanchuma [Balak, 5] and in Yalkut Shimoni [Numbers, 771].

Rav Papa adds a parable to explain this. Consider a woman who is married to a powerful ruler who leads their people out into battle. She is used to being the wife of someone strong, whose powerful hands can skillfully manipulate a sword and overcome any opponents. If her husband were to die she would still want to marry someone in a similar position of leadership and strength. Even if this widow is continually passed over by those she wishes to marry, she will still strive for her former glory, and will even marry a carpenter who, while not leading his countrymen out into battle, still must skillfully handle tools. Even when the ability to reach her old glory is obviously absent, she will still try everything possible to reach any position that remotely resembles it.

Similarly, Balaam started out as a man with prophecy (like a prince or ruler). He was capable of seeing the future and even manipulating it through his curses and blessings. However, when he lost that gift when G-d removed his prophecy, Balaam still wanted to see the future, even resorting to such pale comparisons as sorcery and black magic (like a carpenter).

This passage has absolutely nothing to do with Jesus and there is certainly no insult implied towards Mary.

Cf. R. Meir HaLevi Abulafia, *Yad Ramah*, Sanhedrin ad. loc.; Ephraim Urbach, "Rabbinic Exegesis About Gentile Prophets And The Balaam Passage" (Hebrew), *Tarbitz* (25:1956), p. 284 n. 56.

The Accusation

Gloats over Jesus Dying Young, A passage from Sanhedrin 106 gloats over the early age at which Jesus died: "Hast thou heard how old Balaam (Jesus) was?--He replied: It is not actually stated but since it is written, Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days it follows that he was thirty-three or thirty-four years old."

The Passage

Sanhedrin 106b

א"ל ההוא מינא לרבי חנינא מי שמיע לך בלעם בר כמה הוה. א"ל מיכתב לא כתיב אלא מדכתיב אנשי דמים ומרמה לא יחצו ימיהם בר תלתין ותלת שנין או בר תלתין וארבע. א"ל שפיר קאמרת לדידי חזי לי פנקסיה דבלעם והוה כתיב ביה הר תלתין ותלת שנין בלעם חגירא כד קטיל יתיה פנחס ליסטאה.

A sectarian said to R. Chanina: Do you know how old Balaam was? [R. Chanina] replied: It is not written. However, since it says (Psalms 55:24) "Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days..." he was 33 or 34. [The heretic] said: You said well. I have seen the chronicle of Balaam and it said "At 33 years Balaam the lame was killed by Pinchas (Phineas) the robber."

Again we see the assumption that Balaam is a codeword for Jesus. Here the connection is that Jesus died at the age of 33, and this passage says that Balaam died at that age also. Also, Pinchas and Pontius Pilate both have the letter "P" in their names. Even if this passage refers to Jesus, which it does not, I do not see any gloating.

However, historians generally agree that this passage does not refer to Jesus. The following is taken from Encyclopedia Judaica ("Jesus", vol. 10 p. 16) [transliteration from Hebrew changed for consistency]:

> However, it is impossible to imagine that a Christian would ask a Jew how old Jesus was, and call the Gospel Balaam's Chronicle or that Pontius Pilate, who is not mentioned even once in the whole of rabbinic literature, should be referred to as Pinchas the robber. The sectarian referred to was merely a member of a Gnostic sect who was

> testing whether Chanina could answer a question that was not answered in the Torah. Balaam's Chronicle was an apocryphal book on Balaam. These books often adopted an unfavorable attitude to the patriarchs and the prophets and it was possible that Pinchas of the Bible was called in them Pinchas the robber.

Cf. Urbach, ibid., p. 284; W. Bacher, *Jewish Quarterly Review* O.S. 3, pp. 456-457; Chanoch Zundel Ben Yosef, *Eitz Yosef* to *Ein Ya'akov*, Sotah 11a sv Balaam.

To clarify the issue, let us now address the general claim that Balaam is a talmudic codeword for Jesus.

Balaam

Balaam in rabbinic literature is one of the archetype villains. As we shall see, he was a powerful man whose prophecy and closeness with G-d gave him potential to do much good. However, he chose to use those gifts towards evil. Because of his terrific potential that was utterly twisted, his heavenly abilities that were perverted towards wrongdoing, he is considered the prime example of corruption.

Some scholars have suggested that Balaam is a codeword in talmudic literature for Jesus. However, we will show that Balaam is considered the paragon of evil in passages that cannot refer to Jesus and from these passages we can see that there is no compelling reason to read other similar passages as referring to Jesus. Indeed, reading these passages as referring to Jesus would be breaking with the established understanding of the talmud.

Sifrei on Deuteronomy 34:10

ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה. אבל באומות העולם קם ואיזה זה בלעם בן בעור. אלא יש הפרש בין נבואתו של משה לנבואתו של בלעם. משה לא היה יודע מי מדבר עמו ובלעם היה יודע שנאמר נאם שומע אמרי קל. משה לא היה יודע אימת מדבר עמו עד שנדבר עמו ובלעם היה יודע אימתי היה מדבר שנאמר ויודע דעת עליון. משה לא היה מדבר עמו עד שהוא עומד שנאמר ואתה פה עמוד עמדי ובלעם היה מדבר עמו כשהיא נופל שנאמר מחזה שקי יחזה נופל וגלוי עינים.

"Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses" - But in other nations there did arise. Who? Balaam the son of Beor. But there is a difference between Moses's prophecy and Balaam's prophecy.

Moses did not know who spoke to him but Balaam knew who spoke to him, as it says (Numbers 24:16) "The words of the one who hears the sayings of G-d..."

Moses did not know when G-d would speak to him until he was spoken to but Balaam knew when He would speak, as it says (ibid.) "Who knows the knowledge of the Supreme One..."

With Moses, G-d would not speak to him until he was standing, as it says (Deuteronomy 5:28) "But as for you, stand here with Me..." But with Balaam, G-d would speak to him even while fallen, as it says (Numbers 24:4) "Who sees the vision of the Almighty, while fallen with uncovered eyes."

We see here a clear reference to the biblical Balaam. The descriptions of his awesome prophetic powers, greater than Moses's, are inferred from verses describing the biblical Balaam. There is no way that this passage can refer to Jesus or to Yeshu**.**

Avot DeRabbi Natan 2:5

מה ת"ל איש תם וישר אלא מלמד שיצא איוב מהול. אף אדם הראשון יצא מהול שנאמר ויברא אלקים את האדם בצלמו. אף שת יצא מהול שנאמר ויולד בדמותו כצלמו. אף נח יצא מהול... אף יעקב יצא מהול... אף יוסף יצא מהול... אף משה יצא מהול... אף בלעם הרשע יצא מהול... אף שמואל יצא מהול... אף דוד יצא מהול... אף ירמיה יצא מהול... אף זרובבל יצא מהול...

Why is Job called (Job 1:8) "A perfect and upright man"? To teach us that he was born circumcised. Adam was also born circumcised as it says (Genesis 1:27) "So G-d created man in His image..." Seth was also born circumcised as it says (ibid. 5:2) "He begot in his likeness and his image..." Noah was also born circumcised... Shem was also born circumcised... Jacob was also born circumcised... Joseph was also born circumcised... Moses was also born circumcised... Even the wicked Balaam was born circumcised... Samuel was also born circumcised... David was also born circumcised... Jeremiah was also born circumcised... Zerubabel was also born circumcised...

The Talmud here is working with the understanding that circumcision is the final step in the creation of a man. An uncircucised man is not quite complete and G-d gave it to us to finish the job and complete the creation of man by circumcising him. However, there were some people born with such potential for greatness and perfection that they were born already circumcised. They were born destined for perfection. Among this list of heroes, this list of righteous and holy leaders, is Balaam. He was born with the potential for greatness which he unfortunately perverted towards evil with his free will.

It is clear, however, based on the chronological order, that this refers to the biblical Balaam and not Jesus or Yeshu. Both Jesus and Yeshu would have been listed after David, Jeremiah, and Zerubabel.

Talmud Sanhedrin 106a

לכה איעצך. א"ר אבא בר כהנא... אמר להם אלקיהם של אלו שונא זימה הוא והם מתאוים לכלי פשתן בוא ואשיעך עצה. עשה להן קלעים והושיב בהן זונות זקינה מבחוץ וילדה מבפנים... ובשעה שישראל אוכלין ושותין ויוצאין לטייל בשוק אומרת לו הזקינה אי אתה מבקש כלי פשתן זקינה אומרת לו בשוה וילדה אומרת לו בפחות שתים ושלש פעמים. ואח"כ אומרת לו הרי אתה כבן כית שב ברור לעצמך וצרצורי של יין עמוני מונח אצלה... אמרה לו רצונך שתשתה כוס של יין כיון ששתה בער בו. אמר לה השמיעי לי. הוציאה יראתה מתוך חיקה אמרה לו עבוד לזה. אמר לה יהודי אמי. אמרה לו ומה איכפת לך כלום מבקשים ממך אלא פיעור [והוא אינו יודע שעבודתה בכך] ולא עוד אלא שאיני מנחתך עד שתכפור בתורת משה רבך.

Numbers (24:14) "Come, I shall advise you..." Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said: [Balaam] said to them: Their G-d hates promiscuity and they desire flaxen clothes. Let me give you this advice. Make tents and put old prostitutes in front of them and young ones inside... When the Jews are walking in the market, the old lady offers to sell them clothes at market value and the young one offers it cheaper. After two or three times she tells him that he is already a comfortable visitor and should choose what he wants, all the while a bottle of Amonite wine sitting beside her. She offers him a glass of wine. After he drinks it will burn him up and he will ask for sex. She will take out her idol and demand that he worship it first. He will say that he is a Jew and she will say that all she is asking is that he defecate [and he will not know that this is the worship of that idol]. She will also say that she will not sleep with him until he denounces the Torah of Moses.

This passage discusses the surprising transition in the biblical narrative from Balaam's prophecy (Numbers 24) directly into (Numbers 25:1) "Israel settled in the Shittim and the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab." The Talmud's explanation is that Balaam, the paid advisor of Moab (see Numbers 22), showed the Moabites how and why to entice the Jewish men into harlotry.

This passage is clearly about Balaam and it describes both his cleverness and his despicability. There are many more passages that show that Balaam is considered by the Talmud to be both a powerful and utterly wicked man who earned the title of most hated villain.

Mishnah Avot 5:19

כל מי שיש בו שלשה דברים הללו מתלמידיו של אברהם אבינו ושלשה דברים אחרים מתלמידיו של בלעם הרשע. עין טובה ורוח נמוכה ונפש שפלה מתלמידיו של אברהם אבינו. עין רעה ורוח גבוה ונפש רחבה מתלמידיו של בלעם הרשע. מה בין מתלמידיו של אברהם אבינו לתלמידיו של בלעם הרשע. תלמידיו של אברהם אבינו אוכלין בעולם הזה ונוחלין לעולם הבא שנאמר להנחיל לאוהבי יש ואוצרותיהם אמלא. אבל תלמידיו של בלעם הרשע יורשין גיהנם וירדין לבאר שחת שנאמר ואתה אלקים תורידם לבאר שחת אנשי דמים ומרמה לא יחצו ימיהם ואני אבטח בך.

Whosoever possesses these three qualities belongs to the disciples of Abraham our father: a generous eye, a humble spirit, and a meek soul. But he who possesses the three opposite qualities -- an evil eye, a proud spirit, and a haughty soul -- is of the disciples of Balaam the wicked.

How do the disciples of Abraham differ from the disciples of Balaam? The disciples of Abraham enjoy this world and inherit the world to come, as it is written (Proverbs 8:21) "Endowing with wealth those who love me, and filling their treasuries." The disciples of Balaam inherit Gehenna and go down to the pit of destruction, as it is written (Psalm 55:23) "But you, O G-d, will cast them down into the lowest pit; the bloodthirsty and treacherous shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you."

Here again, we see that Balaam is the paragon of evil. Using strictly Old Testament examples, the Mishnah tries to demonstrate the proper attitudes one should take in life.

The point of all these examples is to show that Balaam is viewed in rabbinic literature as the ultimate villain. Through indisputable proofs we have shown that the biblical Balaam, not Jesus or Yeshu, is consistently painted as someone destined for greatness who instead misused his talents for evil. In contemporary terms, he is the Darth Vader of the Bible. It is therefore no surprise that historians can find many passages that denigrate Balaam. However, there is every reason to believe that these passages refer to the actual Balaam and not to Jesus or Yeshu.

There are some historians who believe that Balaam is a talmudic codeword for Jesus. However, this theory has not stood up to the scrutiny of academic talmudic scholarship and has fallen out of favor with historians.

Professor Louis Ginzberg, "Some Observations on the Attitude of the Synagogue Towards the Apocalyptic-Eschatological Writings", *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1922), p. 121 n. 18

One may therefore state with absolute certainty that the entire Talmudic-Midrashic literature does not know of any nicknames for Jesus or his disciples.

John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (1991), vol. 1 p. 95

For instance, a radical position is represented by Johann Maier, who maintains that not only the Mishna but also both Talmuds lack any authentic, direct mention of Jesus of Nazareth[41]...

In my opinion, Maier's arguments are especially convincing for the Mishna and other early rabbinic material: no text cited from that period really refers to Jesus. He thus confirms the view I defend in this section.

41 See Johann Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Uberlieferung* (Ertrage der Forschung 82; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978). His position, which is argued in minute detail throughout the volume, is summarized on pp. 263-75.

The noted historian of rabbinics, Ephraim E. Urbach, dedicated an article to explaining the rabbinic view of Balaam and debunking the theory that Balaam is a talmudic codeword for Jesus. See Ephraim Urbach, "Rabbinic Exegesis About Gentile Prophets And The Balaam Passage" (Hebrew), Tarbitz (25:1956), pp. 272-289.

The Accusation
Gittin 57a. Says Jesus is in hell, being boiled in "hot excrement."

The Text

Talmud Gittin 56b-57a

אסקיה לבלעם בנגידא אמר ליה מאן חשיב בההוא עלמא א"ל ישראל. מהו לאדבוקי ביה א"ל לא תדרוש שלומם וטובתם כל הימים. א"ל דיניה דההוא גברא במאי א"ל בשכבת זרע רותחת. אזל אסקיה לישו בנגידא א"ל מאן חשיב בההוא עלמא א"ל ישראל. מהו לאדבוקי בהו א"ל טובתם תדרוש רעתם בל תדרוש. כל הנוגע בהן כנוגע בבת עינו. א"ל דיניה דההוא גברא במאי א"ל בצואה רותחת. דאמר מר כל המלעיג על דברי חכמים נידון בצואה רותחת.

[Onkelos Bar Kalonikus] called up Balaam from the dead. [Onkelos] asked: Who is honored in that world? [Balaam] replied: Israel. [Onkelos asked:] What about joining them? [Balaam] replied: (Deut. 23:7) "You shall not seek their peace or welfare all your days." [Onkelos] asked: What is your punishment? [Balaam answered]: In boiling semen.

[Onkelos] called up Yeshu from the dead. [Onkelos] asked: Who is honored in that world? [Yeshu] replied: Israel. [Onkelos asked:] What about joining them? [Yeshu] replied: Seek their good. Do not seek their bad. Whoever touches them is as if he touched the pupil of his eye. [Onkelos] asked: What is your punishment? [Yeshu answered]: In boiling excrement. As the mast said: Whoever mocks the words of the sages in punished in boiling excrement.

Here we see a story of the famous convert Onkelos who, prior to converting, used black magic to bring up famous villains of history and ask them whether their wickedness saved them in the world to come. In both cases (there is a third case of Onkelos calling up Titus as well) the sinner is being terribly punished in the afterlife while Israel is being rewarded. Presumably, this helped convince Onkelos to convert to Judaism.

As we have explained elsewhere (In the next chapter of this pdf), Yeshu is **not** Jesus of the New Testament. He is most likely a prominent sectarian of the early first century BCE who deviated from rabbinic tradition and created his own religion combining Hellenistic paganism with Judaism. While Yeshu may be the proto-Jesus some scholars point to as inspiring the early Christians, he is definitely not the man who was crucified in Jerusalem in the year 33 CE.

Interestingly, if someone were to claim that Yeshu in the passage above is Jesus, then Balaam cannot also refer to Jesus because both Balaam and Yeshu are in the passage together. In other words, it is self-contradicting to claim that the passages above about Balaam's mother being a harlot or dying young refer to Jesus and to claim that the passage above about Yeshu being punished also refers to Jesus. You can't have it both ways.

The Jesus Narrative in The Talmud

There are four main passages in the Talmud that are alleged by some to discuss the story of Jesus' life and death. What we will do here is to analyze these passages closely and see the reasons one may or may not attribute these stories to the life of Jesus. We will also look at another two passages that help us identify our protagonist(s). We will quickly realize that there are great difficulties in stating that any of these texts refer to Jesus. We will see that a large number of historians and talmudists have addressed these issues and have concluded that either none of these passages refer to Jesus or that they refer to a proto-Jesus, whose life was later obfuscated by the theologically motivated rewriting of history.

It is important to keep in mind that there are many people in the Talmud with the same names. R. Aaron Hyman in his biographical work on the sages of the Talmud, *Toldot Tannaim VeAmoraim*, lists 14 Hillels, 61 Elazars, and 71 Hunas. Josephus lists approximately twenty different men named Jesus, at least ten of whom lived in the same time as the famous Jesus [cf. John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, p. 206 n. 6]. The name Panthera was also a common name in the first two centuries [cf. L. Patterson, "Origin of the Name Panthera", *JTS* 19 (1917-18), p. 79-80, cited in Meier, p. 107 n. 48]. When dealing with first names, it is very common to come across different people in the Talmud with the same name and the same applies today. When I refer to Bill, am I talking about the President of the United States, the billionaire founder of Microsoft, or a local celebrity? In one place I could mean one Bill and in another place a different Bill. It is therefore almost impossible to identify someone based on their first name alone. Second names, which in the Talmud means the name of the father, enable us to identify people with much better accuracy, but not entirely. It is very possible for both men and their father's to have the same names. This makes history much harder but ignoring this fact is distorting history.

Passage #1 - Ben Stada

Talmud Shabbat 104b, Sanhedrin 67a

תניא אמר להן רבי אליאזר לחכמים והלא בן סטדא הוציא כספים ממצרים בסריטה שעל בשרו. אמרו לו שוטה היה ואין מביאין ראיה מן השוטים. בן סטדא בן פנדירא הוא. אמר ר' חסדא בעל סטדא בועל פנדירא. בעל פפוס בן יהודה הוא אמו סטדא. אמו מרים מגדלא שיער נשיא היא כדאמרי בפומבדיתא סטת דא מבעלה.

It is taught: R. Eliezer told the sages: Did not Ben Stada bring witchcraft with him from Egypt in a cut that was on his skin? They said to him: He was a fool and you cannot bring proof from a fool.

Ben Stada is Ben Pandira.

R. Chisda said: The husband was Stada and the lover was Pandira.

[No,] the husband was Pappos Ben Yehudah and the mother was Stada.

[No,] the mother was Miriam the women's hairdresser [and was called Stada]. As we say in Pumbedita: She has turned away [Stat Da] from her husband.

Summary

What we see from here is that there was a man named Ben Stada who was considered to be a practitioner of black magic. His mother was named Miriam and also called Stada. His father was named Pappos Ben Yehudah. Miriam (Stada) had an affair with Pandira from which Ben Stada was born.

Proof

Some historians claim that Ben Stada, also known as Ben Pandira, was Jesus. His mother's name was Miriam which is similar to Mary. Additionally, Miriam was called a women's hairdresser, "megadla nashaia" [for this translation, see R. Meir Halevi Abulafia, *Yad Rama*, Sanhedrin ad. loc.]. The phrase "Miriam megadla nashaia" sounds similar to Mary Magdalene, a well-known New Testament figure.

Problems

1. Mary Magdalene was not Jesus' mother. Neither was Mary a hairdresser.
2. Jesus' step-father was Joseph. Ben Stada's step-father was Pappos Ben Yehudah.
3. Pappos Ben Yehudah is a known figure from other places in talmudic literature. The Mechilta Beshalach (Vayehi ch. 6) has him discussing Torah with Rabbi Akiva and Talmud Berachot 61b has Pappos Ben Yehudah being captured

and killed by Romans along with Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva lived during the second half of the first century and the first half of the second century. He died in the year 134. If Pappos Ben Yehudah was a contemporary of Rabbi Akiva's, he must have been born well after Jesus' death and certainly could not be his father.

Passage #2 - Yeshu

Talmud Sanhedrin 107b, Sotah 47a

ר׳ יהושע בן פרחיה מאי הוא. כדקטלינהו ינאי מלכא לרבנן אזל רבי יהושע בן פרחיה וישו לאלכסנדריא של מצרים. כי הוה שלמא שלח ליה שמעון בן שטח מני ירושלים עיר הקודש ליכי אלכסנדריא של מצרים אחותי בעלי שרוי בתוכך ואנכי יושבת שוממה. קם אתא ואתרמי ליה ההוא אושפיזא עבדו ליה יקרא טובא. אמר כמה יפה אכסניא זו. אמר ליה רבי עיניה טרוטות. אמר ליה רשע בכך אתה עוסק. אפיק ארבע מאות שיפורי ושמתיה. אתא לקמיה כמה זמנין אמר ליה קבלן לא הוי קא משגח ביה. יומא חד הוה קא קרי קריאת שמע אתא לקמיה. סבר לקבולי אחוי ליה בידיה הוא סבר מידחא ליה. אזל זקף לבינתא והשתחוה לה. אמר ליה הדר בך. אמר ליה כך מקובלני ממך כל החוטא ומחטיא את הרבים אין מספיקין בידו לעשות תשובה. ואמר מר ישו [הנצרי] כישף והדיח את ישראל.

What of R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah?

When John [Hyrcanus] the king killed the rabbis, R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah [and Yeshu] went to Alexandria of Egypt. When there was peace, Shimon Ben Shetach sent to him "From me [Jerusalem] the holy city to you Alexandria of Egypt. My husband remains in your midst and I sit forsaken."

[R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah] left and arrived at a particular inn and they showed him great respect. He said: How beautiful is this inn [Achsania, which also means innkeeper].

[Yeshu] said: Rabbi, she has narrow eyes.

[R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah] said to him: Wicked one, this is how you engage yourself?

[R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah] sent out four hundred trumpets and excommunicated him.

[Yeshu] came before [R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah] many times and said: Accept me. But [R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah] paid him no attention.

One day [R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah] was reciting Shema [during which one may not be interrupted]. [Yeshu] came before him. He was going to accept [Yeshu] and signalled to [Yeshu] with his hand. [Yeshu] thought that [R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah] was repelling him. He went, hung a brick, and bowed down to it.

[Yeshu] said to [R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah]: You taught me that anyone who sins and causes others to sin is not given the opportunity to repent.

And the master said: Yeshu {the Notzri} practiced magic and deceive and led Israel astray.

Background and Summary

Note that historians differ on the exact years of these events. For simplicity, we will assume the latest possible dates as suggested by Gershon Tannenbaum [*Jewish Time Line Encyclopedia*, p. 87].

John Hyrcanus was a successful king and soldier. During a banquet celebrating his victories in 93 BCE, some Pharisee rabbis offended him and he was convinced by Sadducee leaders to try to kill every Pharisee rabbi [Hyman, vol. II pp. 691-692, 766]. Some rabbis, such as R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah and his student Yeshu, fled to Alexandria outside of John Hyrcanus's reach [Hyman vol. II pp. 647, 692]. Shimon Ben Shetach, however, was hidden in Jerusalem by his sister, Salome Alexandra, who was John Hyrcanus's daughter-in-law [Hyman, vol. II pp. 647, 692, 766, vol. III pp. 1212-1213]. The extremely diverse religious population of Palestine, full of sects such as the Essenes, Kumrans, and numerous other groups, was temporarily devoid of any public Pharisee leaders.

By the year 91 BCE, John Hyrcanus and his sons Antigonus and Aristobulos had died and his third son Alexander Janneus became king. Even though Alexander Janneus was an ardent Sadducee, his wife convinced him to appoint his Pharisaic brother-in-law, Shimon Ben Shetach, to the Sanhedrin, then dominated by Sadducees. Slowly, over the course of a number of years, Shimon Ben Shetach outshone his Sadducee opponents in the Sanhedrin and appointed his Pharisaic students as members [Hyman, vol. II pp. 766-767, vol. III pp. 1213-1214].

By the year 80 BCE it was finally safe for the Pharisee rabbis to quietly return and Shimon Ben Shetach sent a cryptic note to his mentor, R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah, encouraging him to return [Hyman, vol. II pp. 647-648, vol. III pp. 1213-1214].

Some 50 to 60 years after the great Pharisaic victory of the Hasmoneans, in which Pharisees rebelled against the Greek-Syrians and gained the monarchy, these Pharisee rabbis returned to a country full of heretical sects that had either integrated aspects of Hellenist paganism into their religion or had, in an attempt to repel all unproven influence, rejected the traditions of the rabbis. The Pharisees who remembered the prominence in which they had so recently been held were now witnesses to the disintegration of their religious society.

While returning, Yeshu misunderstood one of his teacher's remarks and said something that demonstrated that he was interested in and looking at married women. As sexual promiscuity was a sign of many of the Hellenist sects, R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah suspected his student of being yet another leader influenced by Hellenism and had him excommunicated [this hasty conclusion was condemned by the Talmud a few lines before our passage]. After many attempts by Yeshu to reconcile with his mentor, R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah was finally ready. However, Yeshu approached him while he was reciting Shema, the most important part of the morning prayer during which he could not stop to speak. He motioned to Yeshu with his hand which was misinterpreted as a signal to go away. Yeshu finally gave up and fulfilled his teacher's suspicion. He adopted a pagan religion and went on to create his own sect of Judaism and lead many Jews astray.

Proof

Some historians note some similarities here between Yeshu and Jesus. Most notably, in one manuscript of the Talmud he is called Yeshu the Notzri which could be rendered (with only a little difficulty) Jesus the Nazarene.

Problems

1. Yeshu lived about a century before Jesus.
2. Only one of the approximately four distinct manuscripts available have the title HaNotzri (possibly, the Nazarene). None of the other manuscripts contain that title which makes it suspect as a later interpolation, as medieval commentators suggest [cf. Menachem HaMeiri, *Beit Habechirah*, Sotah ad. loc.].
3. Notzri does not necessarily mean Nazarene. It is actually a biblical term (Jeremiah 4:16). While centuries later it was undoubtedly used to refer to Christians in the form of Notzrim or Netzarim, it could have been a term used to refer to many strong communities. The name "Ben Netzar" was used by the Talmud to refer to the famous chief of robbers Odenathus of Palmyra [see Marcus Jastrow's Dictionary p. 930]
4. The name Yeshu alone could have been common. We know that the name Jesus was common [see Collossians 4:11 and above].
5. Other than the name, nothing in the story fits anything we know about Jesus.

Passage #3 - Trial

Talmud Sanhedrin 67a

דתניא ושאר כל חייבי מיתות שבתורה אין מכמינין עליהן חוץ מזו. כיצד עושין לו מדליקין לו את הנר בבית הפנימי ומושיבין לו עדים בבית החיצון כדי שיהו הן רואין אותו ושומעין את קולו והיא אינו רואה אותן. והלה אומר לו אמור מה שאמרת לי ביחוד והוא אומר לו והלה אומר היאך ננית את אלקינו שבשמים ונעבוד עבודת כוכבים. אם חזר בו מוטב ואם אמר כך היא חובתינו וכך יפה לנו העדים ששומעין מבחוץ מביאין אותו לב"ד וסוקלין אותו. וכן עשו לבן סטדא בלוד ותלאוהו בערב פסח.

It is taught: For all others liable for the death penalty [except for the enticer to idolatry] we do not hide witnesses. How do they deal with [the enticer]? They light a lamp for him in the inner chamber and place witnesses in the outer chamber so that they can see and hear him while he cannot see or hear them. One says to him "Tell me again what you said to me in private" and he tells him. He says "How can we forsake our G-d in heaven and worship idolatry?" If he repents, good. If he says "This is our obligation and what we must do" the witnesses who hear him from outside bring him to the court and stone him. And so they did to Ben Stada in Lud and hung him on the eve of Passover.

Summary

This passage discusses how an enticer to idolatry, one of the worst religious criminals (see Deuteronomy 13:7-12), was caught. The Talmud then continues and says that this was the method used to catch the notorious Ben Stada.

Proof

Again we see Ben Stada. Above we were told that he performed witchcraft and we are now told that he was an idolater as well. The connection to Jesus is that Ben Stada is connected to Jesus in the passage above and that he was executed on the eve of Passover. The Gospel of John (19:14) has Jesus being executed on the eve of Passover.

Problems

1. The same problems above connecting Ben Stada to Jesus apply here as well, including his living almost a century after Jesus.
2. Ben Stada was stoned by a Jewish court and not crucified by the Roman government like Jesus.
3. The Synoptic Gospels say that Jesus was executed on Passover itself (Matthew 26:18-20; Mark 14:16-18; Luke 22:13-15) and not the eve of Passover.
4. Jesus was not crucified in Lud.

Passage #4 - Execution

Talmud Sanhedrin 43a

והא תניא בערב פסח תלאוהו לישו [הנצרי] והכרוז יוצא לפניו מ׳ יום שהוא יוצא ליסקל על שכישף והדיח את ישראל כל מי שיודע לו זכות יבא וילמד עליו ולא מצאו לו זכות ותלאוהו בערב פסח. אמר עולא ותסברא בר הפוכי זכות הוא מסית הוא ורחמנא אמר לא תחמול ולא תכסה עליו אלא שאני ישו [הנצרי] דקרוב למלכות הוה.

It is taught: On the eve of Passover they hung Yeshu and the crier went forth for forty days beforehand declaring that "[Yeshu] is going to be stoned for practicing witchcraft, for enticing and leading Israel astray. Anyone who knows something to clear him should come forth and exonerate him." But no one had anything exonerating for him and they hung him on the eve of Passover.

Ulla said: Would one think that we should look for exonerating evidence for him? He was an enticer and G-d said (Deuteronomy 13:9) "Show him no pity or compassion, and do not shield him."

Yeshu was different because he was close to the government.

<u>Summary</u>

Here we have the story of the execution of Yeshu. Like Ben Stada, he was also executed on the eve of Passover. Before executing him, the court searched for any witnesses who could clear his name, as was normally done before any execution. Ulla, however, questioned this practice. An enticer, due to the biblical mandate not to be merciful, should not be afforded this normal consideration. The Talmud answers that Yeshu was different. Because of his government connections, the court tried to search for any reason not to execute him and upset the government.

<u>Proof</u>

Again we see Yeshu. All of the proofs from above connecting Yeshu to Jesus apply here as well. Additionally, the execution on the eve of Passover is another connection to Jesus as above with Ben Stada.

<u>Problems</u>

1. As mentioned above with Ben Stada, the Synoptic Gospels have Jesus being executed on Passover itself and not the eve of Passover.
2. As above, Yeshu lived a century before Jesus.
3. Yeshu was executed by a Jewish court and not by the Romans. During

Yeshu's time, the reign of Alexander Janneus, the Jewish courts had the power to execute but had to be careful because the courts were ruled by the Pharisees while the king was a Sadducee. It seems clear why the courts would not want to unnecessarily upset the monarch by executing a friend of his. During the Roman occupation of Jesus' time, there is no indication that the Jewish courts had the right to execute criminals.

3. There is no indication from the New Testament that Jesus had friends in the government.

Passage #5 - Disciples

Talmud Sanhedrin 43a

תנ"ר חמשה תלמידים היו לו לישו מתאי נקאי נצר ובוני ותודה. אתיוהו למתי אמר להו מתי יהרג הכתיב מתי אבוא ואראה פני אלקים. אמרו לו אין מתי יהרג דכתיב מתי ימות ואבד שמו. אתיוהו לנקאי אמר להו נקאי יהרג הכתיב ונקי וצדיק אל תהרוג. אמרו לו אין נקאי יהרג דכתיב במסתרים יהרג נקי. אתיוהו לנצר אמר להו נצר יהרג הכתיה ונצר משורשיו יפרה. אמרו ליה אין נצר יהרג דכתיב ואתה השלכת מקברך כנצר נתעב. אתיוהו לבוני אמר להו בוני יהרג הכתיב בני בכורי ישראל. אמרו לו אין בוני יהרג דכתיב הנה אנכי הורג את בנך בכורך. אתיוהו לתודה אמר להו תודה יהרג הכתיב מזמור לתודה. א"ל אין תודה יהרג דכתיב זובח תודה יכבדני.

It is taught: Yeshu had five disciples - Matai, Nekai, Netzer, Buni, and Todah.

They brought Matai [before the judges]. He said to them: Will Matai be killed? It is written (Psalm 42:2) "When [=Matai] shall (I) come and appear before G-d."
They said to him: Yes, Matai will be killed as it is written (Psalm 41:5) "When [=Matai] shall (he) die and his name perish."

They brought Nekai. He said to them: Will Nekai be killed? It is written (Exodus 23:7) "The innocent [=Naki] and the righteous you shall not slay."
They said to him: Yes, Nekai will be killed as it is written (Psalm 10:8) "In secret places he slay the innocent [=Naki]."

They brought Netzer. He said to them: Will Netzer be killed? It is written (Isaiah 11:1) "A branch [=Netzer] shall spring up from his roots."
They said to him: Yes, Netzer will be killed as it is written (Isaiah 14:19) "You are cast forth out of your grave like an abominable branch [=Netzer]."

They brought Buni. He said to them: Will Buni be killed? It is written (Exodus 4:22) "My son [=Beni], my firstborn, Israel."
They said to him: Yes, Buni will be killed as it is written (Exodus 4:23) "Behold, I slay your son [=Bincha] your firstborn."

They brought Todah. He said to them: Will Todah be killed? It is written (Psalm 100:1) "A Psalm for thanksgiving [=Todah]."
They said to him: Yes, Todah will be killed as it is written (Psalm 50:23) "Whoever sacrifices thanksgiving [=Todah] honors me."

Summary

Five of Yeshu's disciples were brought before a court, tried for the crime against G-d and society of idolatry, and executed according to biblical law. This passage presents each disciple cleverly bringing a biblical verse in an attempt to exonerate himself and the court responding likewise.

Proof

The name Yeshu is used as above. The additional proof this passage provides is that Matai is the Hebrew equivalent of Matthew, one of Jesus' disciples.

Problems

1. The same problems above connecting Yeshu to Jesus apply here.
2. Of the five disciples, only one is recognized. What of the other four?
3. The name Matai seems like a nickname or Aramaic equivalent of Matityahu, which was a known Jewish name in that time period. It was probably a common name, considering the high esteem in which the patriarch of the Hasmonean dynasty, Matityahu, was held by the common people. Some manuscripts have the name of R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah's famous colleague as Matai from Arbel [cf. R. Shimon Ben Tzemach Duran, *Magen Avot*, ed. Zeini (Jerusalem:2000) p. 31].

Passage #6 - The Student

Tosefta Chullin 2:23

מעשה בר׳ אליעזר בן דמא בן אחותו של ר׳ ישמעאל שהכישו נחש ובא יעקב איש כפר סכניא לרפאותו משום ישו בן פנדירא ולא הניחו ר׳ ישמעאל.

It once happened that R. Elazar ben Damah was bitten by a snake and Ya'akov of the village Sechania came to heal him in the name of Yeshu ben Pandira, but R. Yishmael did not allow him.

Proof

Here we see the only place in which the names Yeshu and Ben Pandira are connected.

Theories

Hazy History

Some historians consider all of the above passages to refer to Jesus. Granted, there are many difficulties in tying all of the details together, particularly the historical timeframes. However, these historians claim "that chronology was not a science in which the rabbis excelled, or one in which they laid stress upon accuracy" [RT Herford, *Chritianity in Talmud & Midrash*, p. 347]. The rabbis of the talmud had a hazy memory of Jesus and embellished upon it in order to villainize him. The inconsistencies among the various stories are of no consequence because the rabbis did not care. Thus, Jesus is Yeshu is Ben Stada is Ben Pandira. Mary Magdalene is called Jesus' mother due to some vague familiarity with the gospel story. Jesus' execution was recalled but only some details remembered. In fact, these historians found many more references to Jesus in the talmud that did not use his name. Herford lists about twenty different passages that he claims refer to Jesus and still concludes that "it is remarkable how very little the talmud does say about Jesus" [ibid.].

This was at one time the standard approach of historians. However, the obvious bias against talmudic rabbis and the wanton attribution of nameless passages has since given way to a more balanced approach among academics.

Goldstein, in his highly respected doctoral dissertation *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition*, argues against the attribution to Jesus of various references in the talmud, such as Balaam and "a certain person". In his view, this is finding in the texts what one was a priori looking for [Cf. Goldstein, pp. 57-81]. Joseph Klausner does not consider the Ben Stada passages as referring to Jesus [Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 20-23]. Johann Maier concurs and adds that Ben Pandira had no connection to Jesus either [Johann Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Uberlieferung*, p. 237, cited in John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, vol. I p. 106 n. 45]. Maier further denies that the passage in Sanhedrin 43a about the execution and disciples of Yeshu has anything to do with Jesus [Maier, p. 229, cited in Meier vol. I p. 107 n. 51]. John P. Meier, a Catholic priest and author of the most recent and highly acclaimed scholarly analysis of the evidence of Jesus' life, *A Marginal Jew*, which has even been added to the Anchor Bible Reference Library, takes a middle ground and says "While not accepting the full, radical approach of Maier, I think we can agree with him on one basic point: in the earliest rabbinic sources, there is no clear or even probable reference to Jesus of Nazareth" [Meier, vol. I p. 98].

Meier also adds what seems to be a direct answer to Herford's remark quoted above. Meier says "Hence, apart from Josephus, Jewish literature of the early Christian period offers no independent source for inquiry into the historical Jesus. Indeed, why should it? Engaged in a fierce struggle for its own survival and definition, early rabbinic Judaism had other matters on its mind -- matters that, from its own perspective, were much more important" [Meier, ibid.].

Many modern historians detect different strata of texts from different ages within the talmudic period. The passages originally referred to different people named Yeshu, Ben Stada, and Ben Pandira, none of whom were Jesus. Over time, different generations of talmudic rabbis melded the passages together with added phrases and details. However, according to Johann Maier, none of these passages ever related to Jesus. Some scholars, such as Joseph Klausner and John P. Meier, believe that some of the later additions were meant to refer to Jesus, while the original basic text did not. It is therefore very difficult to determine what, if anything, the talmud actually says about Jesus.

These attempts at literary analysis of the talmud, while not quite heretical to traditional Jews, are certainly anathema. We will therefore try to use the literature of more traditional historical views of the talmudic passages along with some classic rabbinic commentaries to understand the subjects of these texts.

Two Yeshus

The standard rabbinic understanding of these passages is that these passages refer to at least two different people [cf. *Tosafot HaRosh*, Sotah 47a sv Yeshu, Shabbat 104b sv Ben Stada; *Tosafot* (uncensored) Shabbat 104b sv Ben Stada; R. Abraham Zacuto, *Sefer Hayuchasin* 5:6, R. Natan David Rabinowitz, *Binu Shenot Dor Vador*, pp. 422-425] . The first lived in the first half of the first century BCE during the reign of Alexander Janneus. The second lived in the first half of the second century CE, during the time of the Roman persecution that led to Rabbi Akiva's tragic death.

The first, Yeshu Ben Pandira, started his own sect and had many followers. His heretical and idolatrous teachings lasted centuries after his life but, like so many Jewish sects, slowly died out after the destruction of the Temple.

The second, Ben Stada, was simply a public idol worshipper from an illustrious family who was caught and punished.

The only connections between the two are their fathers' names, that they were executed on the day before Passover, and that they both spent time in Egypt. The first is probably a mere coincidence because, as pointed out above, Panthera (which in Hebrew and Aramaic is equivalent of Pandira) was a common name.

Ben Stada may have been executed on the day before Passover in Lud out of deference for his illustrious step-father. On that day, most people were gathered in Jerusalem preparing their Passover sacrifices and very few people would have witnessed the execution in Lud. Yeshu Ben Pandira may have been executed on the day before Passover *in Jerusalem* for the exact opposite reason. Since he was the leader of a heretical sect, the court may have wished that the crowd in Jerusalem would see his execution and learn that his sect was a deviation from the true Judaism.

Their both having spent time in Egypt is similar to two American Jews today both visiting New York City at some time in their lives. From the year 307 BCE to the year 113 CE, Alexandria had one of the largest and most illustrious Jewish communities in the world. Its hundreds of thousands of Jews had a very large and active Jewish community, which is probably why R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah and Yeshu were able to hide there . The Alexandrian community was also noted for its affinity to Hellenistic culture. Its most famous product, Philo, wrote exclusively in Greek and propounded a very Hellenistic philosophy which some consider to be heretical to Judaism [see Samuel Belkin's introduction to *Midreshei Philon*]. It is certainly not surprising that the young Ben Pandira's visit to this thriving Jewish center led him to accept a hybrid Jewish-Hellenist religion that was considered idolatry by traditional Jews.

The following chart shows which details refer to each person.

Yeshu Ben Pandira	
Passage 2	Lived appr. 80 BCE
	Student of R. Yehoshua Ben Perachiah
	Escaped persecution by fleeing to Egypt and, upon return, became an idolater
Passage 4	Executed on the day before Passover
	Had close contact with government officials
Passage 5	Had five disciples who were also executed.
Passage 6	His legacy remained for centuries, even until the time of R. Yishmael (died 133)

Ben Stada	
Passage 1	Lived appr. 100 CE
	Sometimes called Ben Pandira but mainly Ben Stada, possibly to differentiate him from Yeshu Ben Pandira
	Brought witchcraft from Egypt
	Mother was Miriam the hairdresser, also known as Stada
	Father was Pandira
	Step-father was Pappos Ben Yehudah
Passage 3	Executed on the day before Passover in Lud for idolatry

Early Jesus

Some historians go further. It is well known, and long a matter of controversy, that beginning in the early 19th century some historians disputed the existence of an historical Jesus at all. According to this theory, Jesus never existed and the early church fathers created him as a figure for their religion. The gospels are compilations of various legends that were attributed to this mythical character Jesus. Much ink has been spilled debating this theory, but there are some historians who accept this and go one step further. They identify the basis of the New Testament Jesus in the story of Yeshu Ben Pandira. This legendary figure, who was branded a heretic by Jewish leaders, founded a Jewish sect that inspired and influenced the early Christians. These early Christians then adopted the story of Yeshu Ben Pandira and modified it to fit into a later historical period and their own eclectic religious beliefs. [cf. R. Avraham Ibn Daud, *Sefer Hakabbalah*, 53; *Sefer Hayuchasin*, ibid.; Avraham Korman, *Zeramim Vekitot Beyahadut*, pp. 354-364].

Some daring scholars have even identified the original Jesus or proto-Jesus, Yeshu Ben Pandira, as the Teacher of Righteousness who led the sect in Qumran [cf. Alvar Ellegård, *Jesus One Hundred Years Before Christ*; G.R.S. Mead, *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?*; G. A. Wells, *The Jesus Myth*].

While these theories are highly speculative and certainly not mainstream, researchers have amassed a large amount of evidence, from archaelogical finds to medieval references, that point to either this or a similar conclusion.

Conclusion

It seems clear by now that there is no consensus whether Jesus is mentioned at all in the Talmud. Most of the supposed "blasphemies" of Jesus and Mary in the Talmud do not refer to them at all. However, there can be no denying, and no rabbi would deny this, that the authors of the Talmud did not believe in Jesus' messiahship or his divinity. If you are looking for Christian fellowship then Jewish literature is not the place to look. However, there is no basis at all to state unequivocally that the Talmud calls Jesus a bastard or that Mary was a prostitute who had sex with many men. As has been shown, those passages definitely do not refer to Jesus.

Note: The wording of the texts was taken from Chisronot Hashas, originally printed in Koenigsberg in 1860 and reprinted in Tel Aviv in 1989. The text of the Tosefta was taken from the standard Vilna edition and slightly modified based on Saul Lieberman's *Tosefet Rishonim*.

Christianity in The Talmud

Well… Rabbi Gil's website never filled this one out. I assume the original website was not completed or perhaps it was a throwaway. The research was good, but it seems this article wasn't ever made. I checked the logs of the Talmud Faithweb website through the Internet Archive like the nerd I am, nothing there. Truthfully, I didn't check every single update. I know offhand there are different takes about Christianity rabbinically. There are also many denominations and different theological takes on Christianity. It seems to me that many Rabbinical Authorities deem Christianity as Idolatry for Jew and nonJew. Some Rabbinical Authorities hold that nonJews can believe in divinities and therefore, for a nonJew they are not considered idol worshippers for believing in the Trinity. From what I've gathered it's heavily debated. A righteous nonJew I'd say should veer away from the Trinity as it's extremely murky water. However, for a Jew? I would say not to judge the Christian. Whilst there are certain laws for us to maintain in dealing with idol worshippers today, in terms of business during their holidays etc, I don't see the point in hating Christians as some extremists do. There is room to say for the nonJewish Christian - they may be following the 7 laws of Noach.

This is the most important thing - to be like Aron the High Priest, brother of Moses, leader of the Jewish people - loving peace and seeking peace. We face a tough time in the world, there is much hate. Unfortunately, Radical Judaism, Radical Islam, and Radical Christianity do exist. We should agree to disagree theologically and respect one another. Our core ethics - what defines human behaviour are practically mirrored. We are called the Abrahamic religions, and Abraham according to all three religions excelled in kindness and piety.

Blood Libel

There is an often repeated accusation against Jews that they kidnap and kill Christian children around Passover time to use their innocent Christian blood in the baking of matzah that will be eaten on Passover. This lie is so ludicrous that it would be hilarious if it had not had such tragic consequences. Despite its obvious untruth to anyone familiar with Judaism, thousands of Jews have been murdered due to anger aroused by this lie.

We have already shown that it is absolutely forbidden for a Jew to kill a gentile. What we will show here is that Jews are forbidden to eat **ANY** blood and take great pains to avoid eating it. We show great respect for an animal's blood by burying it and we carefully remove all blood from our meat by washing and salting it while raw. If anything, gentiles who do not salt their meat eat more blood than an observant Jew.

Leviticus 7:26-27

וכל דם לא תאכלו בכל מושבתיכם לעוף ולבהמה. כל נפש אשר תאכל כל דם ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מעמיה.

You shall not consume any blood, in any of your dwelling places, whether from fowl or from animals. Any person who consumes any blood - that soul will be cut off from its people.

Leviticus 17:10-14

ואיש איש מבית ישראל ומן הגר הגר בתוכם אשר יאכל כל דם ונתתי פני בנפש האכלת את הדם והכרתי אתה מקרב עמה. כי נפש הבשר בדם הוא ואני נתתיו לכם על המזבח לכפר על נפשתיכם כי הדם הוא בנפש יכפר. על כן אמרתי לבני ישראל כל נפש מכם לא תאכל דם והגר הגר בתוככם לא יאכל דם. ואיש איש מבני ישראל ומן הגר הגר בתוכם אשר יצוד ציד חיה או עוף אשר יאכל ושפך את דמו וכסהו בעפר. כי נפש כל בשר דמו בנפשו הוא ואמר לבני ישראל דם כל בשר לא תאכלו כי נפש כל בשר דמו הוא כל אכליו וכרת.

Any man of the House of Israel and of the proselyte who dwells among them who will consume any blood - I shall concentrate My attention upon the soul consuming the blood, and I will cut it off from its people. For the soul of the flesh is in the blood and I have assigned it for you upon the Altar to provide atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that atones for the soul. Therefore I have said to the Children of Israel: "Any person among you may not consume blood; and the proselyte who dwells among may not consume blood." Any man of the Children of Israel and of the proselyte who dwells among them who will trap a beast or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For the life of any creatures - its blood represents its life, so I say to the Children of Israel, "You shall not consume the blood of any creature; for the life of any creature is its blood, whoever consumes it will be cut off."

Deuteronomy 12:16, 23-25

רק הדם לא תאכלו על הארץ תשפכנו כמים... רק חזק לבלתי אכל הדם כי הדם הוא הנפש
ולא תאכל הנפש עם הבשר. לא תאכלנו על הארץ תשפכנו כמים. לא תאכלנו למען ייטב
לך ולבניך אחריך כי תעשה הישר בעיני ה׳.

But you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it onto the earth, like water... Only be strong not to eat the blood - for the blood, it is the life - and you shall not eat the life with the meat. You shall not eat it, you shall pour it onto the ground like water. You shall not eat it, in order that it be well with you and your children after you, when you do what is right in the eyes of G-d.

The biblical prohibition against eating blood is taken very seriously by Jews. It is repeated throughout the Talmudic and post-Talmudic literature and various methods of avoiding eating blood have played a prominent part of Jewish literature.

The Sefer HaChinuch offers an explanation of this prohibition.

Sefer HaChinuch, 148

ואפשר לומר בדם עוד כי מלבד רוע מזגו שהוא רע המזג, יהיה באכילתו קצת קנין במדת
אכזריות, שיבלע האדם מבעלי חיים שכמותו בגוף, אותו הדבר שבהם החיות ממש תלוי
עליו, ונפשם נקשרת בו.

It is possible to say regarding blood, in addition to the bad temperament that it contains, its consumption involves acquiring wicked traits - when a man consumes from an animal physically similar to him the very thing upon which his life depends and to which his soul is connected.

A reiteration of the prohibition against consuming blood can be found at every historical stage of Jewish law.

Tosefta Keritot 2:12

האוכל כזית דם מן בהמה מן חיה מן עופות טהורין מביא חטאת... דם מהלכי שתים דם
ביצים ודם שרצים אסור ואין חייבין עליו.

One who eats an olive's worth of blood from a wild animal, domesticated animal, or from kosher birds brings a sin-offering... The blood of those who walk on two feet, the blood of eggs, and the blood of insects is forbidden but one is not obligated to bring a sin-offering.

This Tosefta is reaffirmed in the Talmud itself in Keritot 21b-22a and is quoted in the medieval legal works by R. Yitzchak Alfasi (Chullin 39a) and R. Asher (Chullin 8:28).

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Ma'achalot Assurot 6:1

האוכל כזית מן הדם במזיד חייב כרת בשוגג מביא חטאת קבועה.

One who eats an olive's worth of blood intentionally is cut off from his people. One who eats it accidentally brings a sin-offering.

This is also echoed in *Shulchan Aruch*, Yoreh Deah 64:1. The Talmud tells us that for an animal's heart to be eaten it must first be split up crosswise and have all the blood removed from it (Talmud Chullin 109a). For a liver, which is full of blood, to be eaten it must be broiled so that the blood comes out during cooking (Talmud Chullin 110b-111a). Not only eating, but drinking blood is also forbidden (Jerusalem Talmud Yoma 8:3).

When an animal is ritually slaughtered, i.e. slaughtered for consumption according to Jewish law, the animal's blood must be covered as a form of burial (Midrash Tanchuma Bereishit 10) as we saw above in Leviticus 17:13-14. The Talmud devotes an entire chapter, Chullin chapter 6, to the subject of covering the blood. It is still practiced to this day by Jewish *Shochtim*, ritual slaughterers, when they slaughter animals for consumption.

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Shechitah 14:1

מצות עשה לכסות דם שחיטת חיה טהורה או עוף טהור.

It is a positive commandment to cover the blood of a slaughtered kosher animal or kosher bird.

This is echoed in *Shulchan Aruch*, Yoreh Deah 28:1 and there is a whole literature on the details of exactly how in each circumstance to respectfully cover the animal's blood.

Have you ever seen Kosher Salt before? I use it to spread on ice on winter days but it also has a holier purpose. Kosher Salt is used to spread on raw meat to absorb the blood. While today it is generally done in factories, until a generation ago every Jewish mother knew exactly how to rinse and salt meat.

The Talmud (Talmud Chullin 113a) describes the process of first washing the blood off of raw meat, then spreading salt on it to absorb the remaining blood, and then washing the meat again to rinse off the blood-soaked salt. It is only through this process that meat can become kosher. Any meat that is not

rinsed-salted-rinsed properly within three days of its slaughter is not kosher and is prohibited to be eaten by Jews. This is duly recorded by Maimonides in *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Ma'achalot Assurot 6:10 and *Shulchan Aruch*, Yoreh Deah 69:1. In fact, the *Shulchan Aruch* reserves 10 chapters to discuss the details of salting meat (chapters 69-78).

It is these precautions and the almost obsessive avoidance of eating blood by Jews that makes the blood libel charges against them so ludicrous. Christians, who don't salt their meat or broil their livers, accuse Jews of eating the blood from Christian children when that could not be farther from the truth. However, truth has never stood in the way of a resentful and angry mob searching for any excuse to kill Jews.

The Passover Haggadah Is Not Racist

The Accusation

"We beg Thee, O Lord, inflict Thy wrath on the nations not believing in Thee. Take away, O Lord all hope from them. Destroy all foes of Thy nation."--Synagoga Judaica, p. 212. Minhagen, p. 23. Crach Chaim, 480 Hagah

This is partially accurate. Towards the end of the Passover Seder, the religious service of the first two evenings of Passover, a similar passage is recited. However, the passage is not at all as ominous as the accusers would have one believe. This is a direct quote from the Bible and is a request that G-d destroy those who destroyed the Temple and exiled the Jewish people. It was first said by a mournful Jeremiah and then included in Psalms. In the messianic hope of the end of the Seder we ask G-d to avenge the destruction of His Temple and rebuild it. One source of this custom is *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim 480:1 (Hagah). The exact verses read differ based on custom [see R. Menachem Mendel Kasher, *Haggadah Sheleimah*, pp. 177-178] however all start with Psalms 79:6-7. I include below the parallel verse in Jeremiah. In no way is this an anti-gentile prayer. It is an anti-destroyer prayer.

Psalms 79:6-7

שפך חמתך על הגוים אשר לא ידעוך ועל ממלכות אשר בשמך לא קראו כי אכלו את יעקב
ואת נוהו השמו.

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not recognize You, and upon the kingdoms that do not invoke Your Name. For they have devoured Jacob, and destroyed His habitation.

Jeremiah 10:25

שפך חמתך על הגוים אשר לא ידעוך ועל משפחות אשר בשמך לא קראו כי אכלו את יעקב
ואת נוהו השמו.

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that know You not and upon the families that do not call out in Your Name, for they have consumed Jacob - they have consumed him and annihilated him - and have devastated his abode.

Explaining Kol Nidrei

Mishnah Bava Metzia 4:2

אמרו מי שפרע מאנשי דור המבול ומדור הפלגה הוא עתיד להפרע ממי שאינו עומד בדבורו.

They said: He who exacted punishment from the generation of the Flood [Gen. 7] and the generation of the Dispersion [Gen. 11] will exact punishment from he who does not stand by his word.

The Accusation

Lying to Gentiles is institutionalized within the Jewish religion in the Kol Nidre rite, when all oaths that were broken in the preceding year, are rendered null and void.

The Kol Nidrei service is the first part of the Yom Kippur services and has a long history of being misunderstood. A simple reading of the text without any Talmudic or legal knowledge would lead one to believe that it is license to lie and deceive. However, even a little knowledge shows that this perception is totally incorrect. What we will show is that Kol Nidrei's effect is legally very small and is, in fact, either an annulment for strictly personal vows or a clause for a limited number of future personal vows. Either way, it absolutely **DOES NOT** undermine the effectiveness of vows taken for others.

The Text

Kol Nidrei [Artscroll Yom Kippur Machzor translation - different textual versions will be discussed later]

כל נדרי ואסרי ושבועי וחרמי וקונמי וקונוסי וכינויי דאנדרנא ודאשתבענא ודאחרמנא
ודאסרנא על נפשתנא מיום כפורים [שעבר עד יום כפורים זה ומיום כפורים] זה עד יום
כפורים הבא עלינו לטובה בכלהון אחרטנא בהון כלהון יהון שרן שביקין שבית בטלין
ומבטלין לא שרירין ולא קיימין נדרנא לא נדרי ואסרנא לא אסרי ושבועתנא לא שבועות.

All vows, prohibitions, oaths, consecrations, konam-vows, konas-vows, or equivalent terms that we may vow, swear, consecrate, or prohibit upon ourselves - [from the last Yom Kippur until this Yom Kippur, and] from this Yom Kippur until the next Yom Kippur, may it come upon us for good - regarding them all, we regret them henceforth. They all will be permitted, abandoned, cancelled, null and void, without power and without standing. Our vows shall not be valid vows; our prohibitions shall not be valid prohibitions; and our oaths shall not be valid oaths.

Oaths and Vows

Judaism takes vows and oaths very seriously. While the Bible has many passages discussing vows about sacrifices, the only passage in the Pentateuch regarding personal vows is in Numbers 30.

Numbers 30:3

איש כי ידר נדר לה׳ או השבע שבעה לאסר אסר על נפשו לא יחל דברו ככל היוצא מפיו יעשה.

If a man takes a vow to G-d or swears an oath to establish a prohibition upon himself, he shall not desecrate his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth he shall do.

This prohibition against violating one's oaths is considered so strong that the Talmud [Shevuot 39a] states that the whole world shakes over this prohibition. The Talmud [Bava Metzia 5b] says that even Jewish thieves (yes, there are thieves in every society) are more careful about keeping their word than respecting other's property.

Annulment Of Vows

As part of the Oral Law we have a tradition that oaths can be nullified by a court [Talmud Chagigah 10a; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Shevuot 6:1]. When a person regrets having ever taken an oath a court can declare his oath to be null and void. However, and this is crucial, there are severe limitations regarding which oaths a court is empowered to nullify.

A somewhat similar notion to the above can be found regarding a woman's oath in Numbers 30:4-10 although there are very big differences between that and a court's nullification. Anyone who is a biblical literalist will reject the concept of annulment of oaths. However, Jews accept this tradition as having been given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Taking oaths is a worthy way of inducing oneself to act properly. Because of the power of an oath, it is an extremely useful psychological motivator. While Ecclesiastes (5:4) tells us "Better that you not vow at all than that you vow and not pay", there are times when vowing is beneficial in inducing proper behavior [see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Nedarim 13:23; Talmud Chullin 2a-b].

Only these oaths can be nullified. Oaths involving more than one person require both to be present and to agree to the annulment.

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 211:4

אין דברים הללו אמורים אלא בשבועה או נדר שנשבע ונדר לעצמו אבל מי שהשביעו חבירו או הדירו אין ביטול זה מועיל לו כלום.

All this [about annulling oaths] is said only about a vow or oath that was vowed or sworn for oneself. However, if someone else induced one to vow or swear this annulment does not help at all.

Think about it. The Talmud dedicates one sixth of itself to detailing the Jewish court system which adjudicates based on the sworn testimony of witnesses. What good is their testimony if they can have a different court nullify it in the future? For that reason Jewish courts specifically include in the language of the oath that the witnesses are swearing with the court in mind so that the oath cannot be nullified [Talmud Shevuot 29a; Nedarim 25a].

Any oath taken with others in mind cannot be nullified without their presence and approval. This is affirmed in the following quote and by Nachmanides, *Teshuvot HaRamban*, 248, 280; Rabbi Yerucham, *Toldot Adam VeChavah*, 7, 12; *Tur*, Orach Chaim 619; *Shulchan Aruch*, Yoreh Deah 211:4.

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Shevuot 6:7

ראובן שהשביע לשמעון ועונה אמן או קבל השבועה ונחם שמעון על שבועתו ונשאל עליה אין מתירין לו אלא בפני ראובן שהשביעו... ואפילו היה... קטן או עכו"ם אין מתירין לו אלא בפניו כדי שידע הנידר שהתיר זה נדרו או שבועתו.

Reuven who induces Shimon to swear and answers "Amen" or accepted the oath and Shimon subsequently regrets the oath and requests an annulment, the court does not annul it except before Reuven who induced the oath... Even if the inducer is a child or a gentile the court does not annul it except before him so that he will know that the oath was annulled.

Pre-Existing Clause

Like a contract, whatever clauses one includes in one's vow are binding. If one were to vow to "never eat hamburgers except on weekdays" then one would be allowed to eat hamburgers five days a week. If one were to vow to "never eat hamburgers but this vow is null and void" then the vow would not have any effect. Because one included within the vow a clause that nullified the vow, the vow did not have any obligatory effect. With this in mind, let us address the following passage from the Talmud.

Talmud Nedarim 23b

הרוצה שלא יתקיימו נדריו כל השנה יעמוד בראש השנה ויאמר כל נדר שאני עתיד לידור יהא בטל... ובלבד שלא יהא זכור בשעת הנדר.

One who wishes that none of his vows should have effect all year should stand at the beginning of the year and say "All vows that I will make this year will be null"... as long as one does not remember at the time of the vow.

By making this clause ahead of time one is establishing a standard clause that is automatically included in all vows for the rest of the year. However, there is an interesting and important conclusion to this passage - "as long as one does not remember at the time of the vow." If one remembers this clause at the time of the vow one must repeat it out loud. If not, one is, by omission, disavowing the original clause. However, if one forgets then one is not disavowing the original clause and it is still in effect. In other words, this clause from the beginning of the year only works if one forgets it. Otherwise one has to say it again at the time of the vow.

Another important point is that this pre-existing clause does not work if someone else is inducing the vow. When the vow concerns others it must be fully vocalized at the time of the vow in front of these others. Anything that is not said at the time is null and void including this pre-existing clause.

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Shevuot 2:16

מי שנשבע ואמר שבועה שלא אוכל היום ועל דעתכם אני נשבע אין זה יכול לומר כך וכך היה בלבי שלא נשבע על דעתו אלא על דעת אחרים.

One who takes an oath and says "I vow not to eat today and on your intentions I swear" cannot say "I had such-and-such in mind" because he did not vow on his intentions but on the intentions of others.

This is also affirmed by Rabbi Nissim from Gerona, *Ran*, Nedarim 23b; Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel, *Rosh*, ad loc.; Rabbeinu Tam, *Tosafot*, ad loc.; *Shulchan Aruch*, Yoreh Deah 210:1, Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer, *Biur HaGra*, Yoreh Deah 210:3.

Kol Nidrei

Kol Nidrei dates back to at least the ninth century where it was included in the first comprehensive prayer books, *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*. In the twelfth

century, a debate within the Jewish community ensued regarding the intent of Kol Nidrei.

The clear intent of this service as it was originally written was to be an annulment of previous vows that, immediately prior to the day of judgement (Yom Kippur), would free a person from being liable from violating *personal* vows. Since, as we saw above, only personal vows can be annulled, Kol Nidrei sought to remove from people the possible stigma of violating their personal vows.

In the twelfth century, Rabbeinu Tam objected to this application of the annulment of vows due to a number of technical reasons, particularly its lack of individuality. How can you annul an individual's vows in a group ceremony which does not even list the vows, asked Rabbeinu Tam? Therefore, Rabbeinu Tam insisted on changing the text of Kol Nidrei to use a future tense so it would serve as a pre-existing clause in future vows (assuming that individuals read along quietly with the service) [*Tosafot*, Nedarim 23b]. This change was opposed and the original text was defended by some scholars, such as R. Asher ben Yechiel [*Rosh*, Yoma 8:28]. The prevailing custom is to either follow Rabbeinu Tam's modified text or to use a compromise version that includes both past and future vows.

However, and this is crucial, **NO ONE** claims that Kol Nidrei exempts individuals from either past or future vows that involve others. Kol Nidrei is **ONLY** for personal vows, as demonstrated above. Whether in business deals or in interpersonal interaction, Kol Nidrei does not in any way provide license for Jews to be deceitful or lying.

The Talmud Doesn't Support Child Abuse

The Accusation

Yebhamot 11b: "Sexual intercourse with a little girl is permitted if she is three years of age."

The accusation here is quite nefarious. It implies that Judaism permits pedophilia, has no respect for women, and generally advocates loose sexual morals. To those familiar with the Talmud, this claim is patently ridiculous. However, the majority of people — particularly those making this claim — know little to nothing about the Talmud, its contents, or its methodology. On our website The Real Truth About The Talmud, we elaborate on these issues. However, for now, we will focus on the accusation at hand. It is, in fact, easily verified as being incorrect.

The Text

Talmud Ketuvot 11b (The citation mentioned is evidently in error. Talmud Yevamot 11b has no relevant passage)

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב קטן הבא על הגדולה עשאה מוכת עץ... אמר רבא
הכי קאמר גדול הבא על הקטנה ולא כלום דפחות מכאן אצבעו בעין דמי.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: A male child who has relations with a female adult causes her to be like one who was injured with a stick... Rava said: This is what was meant - an adult male who has relations with a female child has not done anything because less than this [three years old] is like sticking a finger into an eyeball.

While those unused to these Talmudic discussions might be taken aback by the use of euphemisms, the discussion here relates to the dowry for virgins and non-virgins. It has nothing to do with what acts are allowed, encouraged, forbidden, or discouraged. It is, indeed, ironic that this passage has been manipulated from its original context of a financial discussion into one of a religious discussion. While there are numerous talmudic passages of a religious nature, this one discusses dowries and not forbidden and permitted relations!

The Talmud relates that a virgin is entitled to a higher dowry. While the tell-tale sign of virginity is the release of blood due to the breaking of the hymen on the wedding night, there are occasions when the hymen has already been broken

such as when the woman suffered an injury. The Talmud here quotes Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav that a sexual act with a male minor is not considered to be a loss of virginity because one of the participants is not fully active. While the female's hymen may have been broken, she has not engaged in what can be classified as a sexual act (although it is certainly child abuse).

The Talmud continues and quotes Rava as saying that a sexual act between a male adult and a female under the age of three is also not considered a loss of virginity (although it is child abuse). Since the girl is too young for her hymen to be broken, she is still considered a virgin.

Nowhere is the Talmud permitting such behavior. Sex outside of a marriage is strictly forbidden (Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Ishut 1:4, Hilchot Na'arah Betulah 2:17; *Shulchan Aruch*, Even HaEzer 26:1, 177:5) as is this obvious case of child abuse. The Talmud is only discussing ex post facto what would happen if such a case arose.

That non-marital sexual relations is prohibited is stated explicitly by Maimonides in the following passage from his ground-breaking legal code Mishneh Torah:

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Ishut 1:4

כל הבועל אשה לשם זנות בלא קידושין לוקה מן התורה

Whoever has licentious relations with a woman without marriage bonds is lashed by biblical mandate.

The claim that the Talmud, or normative Judaism, permits sexual relations with a minor is almost entirely incorrect. The slight truth in it is that, in certain societies in history, people were sometimes married as young as ten. While this was most recently done in Czarist Russia in order to avoid being drafted into the Czar's army (which was made especially difficult for Jews), it is not currently done. However, even in that case, marriage is required before having sexual relations. Judaism as a religion prohibits sexual relations, indeed even minor touching such as holding hands, outside of marriage.

It is certainly true that there are individual Jews who do not follow the teaching of the Talmud. That is their personal choice, just like many Catholics choose to use birth control and have premarital relations despite their religion's teaching against

it. This does not mean that Catholicism permits premarital relations and it does not mean that Judaism (and the Talmud) does either. The personal choices of people whether to follow their religion completely does not reflect on what their religion teaches. Similarly, the fact that certain Muslims drink alcohol and frequent prostitutes does not mean that their religion permits it. It means that these individuals choose to defy their religion.

We leave it to others to deduce why some people would make baseless accusations against the Talmud and, by implication, Judaism and Jews.

R. Gil brings up wonderful points here, why he didn't bring this quote up beats me but just to bury the hatchet further -

Pirkei Avot 5
Dr. Joshua Kulp

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, בֶּן חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים לַמִּקְרָא, בֶּן עֶשֶׂר לַמִּשְׁנָה, בֶּן שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה לַמִּצְוֹת, בֶּן חֲמֵשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה לַתַּלְמוּד, בֶּן שְׁמֹנָה עֶשְׂרֵה לַחֻפָּה, בֶּן עֶשְׂרִים לִרְדֹּף, בֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים לַכֹּחַ, בֶּן אַרְבָּעִים לַבִּינָה, בֶּן חֲמִשִּׁים לָעֵצָה, בֶּן שִׁשִּׁים לַזִּקְנָה, בֶּן שִׁבְעִים לַשֵּׂיבָה, בֶּן שְׁמֹנִים לַגְּבוּרָה, בֶּן תִּשְׁעִים לָשׂוּחַ, בֶּן מֵאָה כְּאִלּוּ מֵת וְעָבַר וּבָטֵל מִן הָעוֹלָם:

He used to say: At five years of age the study of Scripture; At ten the study of Mishnah; At thirteen subject to the commandments; At fifteen the study of Talmud; At eighteen the bridal canopy; At twenty for pursuit [of livelihood]; At thirty the peak of strength; At forty wisdom; At fifty able to give counsel; At sixty old age; At seventy fullness of years; At eighty the age of "strength"; At ninety a bent body; At one hundred, as good as dead and gone completely out of the world.

The Real Story About Rabbi Eleazar

The Accusation

Abodah Zarah 17a. States that there is not a whore in the world that the Talmudic sage Rabbi Eleazar has not had sex with.

By concisely summarizing the story told by the Talmud and slightly modifying the name, the accusation has changed a moving story about one man's return to G-d into a tale about a Talmud sage's sexual impropriety. We will present the whole story which has a very different message.

There are two things that are important to note. First, as is obvious, the story begins with Eleazar ben Durdia as patronizing prostitutes but concludes with his sorrowful repentance and acceptance into the world-to-come. Also, in most manuscripts he is not called Rabbi until the very end of the story, after his repentance. Clearly, he was not a scholar at all but merely an average (or below average) man who had a spiritual awakening that can be a lesson to us all about the power to change oneself.

Talmud Avodah Zarah 17a

אמרו עליו על אלעזר בן דורדיא שלא הניח זונה אחת בעולם שלא בא עליה פעם אחת.
שמע שיש זונה אחת בכרכי הים והיתה נוטלת כים דינרין בשכרה. נטל כים דינרין והלך
ועבר עליה שבעה נהרות. בשעת הרגל דבר הפיחה. אמרה כשם שהפיחה זו אינה חוזרת
למקומה כך אלעזר בן דורדיא אין מקבלין אותו בתשובה. הלך וישב בין שני הרים וגבעות.
אמר הרים וגבעות בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו לו עד שאנו מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו
שנאמר כי ההרים ימושו והגבעות תמוטינה. אמר שמים וארץ בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו לו עד
שאנו מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו שנאמר כי שמים כעשן נמלחו והארץ כבגד תבלה.
אמר חמה ולבנה בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו לו עד שאנו מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו שנאמר
וחפרה הלבנה ובושה החמה. אמר כוכבים ומזלות בקשו עלי רחמים אמרו לו עד שאנו
מבקשים עליך נבקש על עצמנו שנאמר ונמקו כל צבא השמים. אמר אין הדבר תלוי אלא בי.
הניח ראשו בין ברכיו ונעה בבכיה עד שיצתה נשמתו. יצאת בת קול ואמרה ר"א בן דורדיא
מזומן לחיי העולם הבא.

They said about Eleazar ben Durdia that there was no prostitute in the world with whom he did not have intercourse at least once. He heard that there was one particular prostitute in a town near the sea who would receive a purse full of *dinars* for her services. He took a purse full of *dinars* and went to her, crossing over seven rivers. During intercourse she passed gas. She said: Just like this gas will never return to its place so too Eleazar ben Durdia will never have his repentance accepted (literally - will never return).

He went and sat between two mountains and hills. He said: Mountains and hills, request mercy for me. They said: Before we request mercy for you we have to request mercy for ourselves, at is says (Isaiah 54:10) "For the mountains will be moved and the hills will falter..."

He said: Heavens and earth, request mercy for me. They said: Before we request mercy for you we have to request mercy for ourselves, at is says (Isaiah 51:6) "For the heavens will dissipate like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment..."

He said: Sun and moon, request mercy for me. They said: Before we request mercy for you we have to request mercy for ourselves, at is says (Isaiah 24:23) "The moon will be humiliated and the sun will be shamed..."

He said: Stars and constellations, request mercy for me. They said: Before we request mercy for you we have to request mercy for ourselves, at is says (Isaiah 34:4) "All the host of the heavens will dissolve..."

He said: This matter depends solely on me. He put his head between his knees and began to tremble from crying until he died. A heavenly voice declared: R. Eleazar ben Durdia is ready for the world-to-come.

While the Talmud has certainly taken liberties with the details of the story, mountains and stars do not talk (see Tosafot ad. loc.), the message is clear. A prostitute made a snide remark to Eleazar about how far gone he was from his religion and, as a believing albeit unobservant man, he wished for divine mercy. He went around looking for ways to find mercy or, as some read it, looking for scapegoats on whom to blame his behavior (see R. Yonatan Eyebeshitz, *Ye'arot Devash*, sermon 3 p. 56a). His conclusion, however, was that he alone was to blame for his behavior and his deep-felt remorse led to his tearful death. This repentance was sufficient for him to earn a place in the world-to-come (see R. Shlomo Eidels, *Chiddushei Maharsha*, ad. loc.).

An honest reading of the full talmudic passage shows that the accusation was totally misleading and unfounded.

Schindler's List

The Accusation

The movie Schindler's list lied when it quoted the Talmud as saying "He who saves a single life, saves the entire world." The Talmud really only advocates saving Jewish lives, not any life.

This accusation is partly true. One place where this passage appears only deals with Jews.

Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a

כל המאבד נפש אחת מישראל - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא, וכל המקיים נפש אחת - מישראל מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא

"Whoever destroys a soul from Israel, the Scripture considers it as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life from Israel, the Scripture considers it as if he saved an entire world."

However, this is not the only place in Talmudic literature that this passage appears. In the Jerusalem (also called Palestinian) Talmud, the passage does not single out Jews. Here is how it appears:

Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 4:1 (22a)

כל המאבד נפש אחת - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא, וכל המקיים נפש אחת - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא

"Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world."

This passage refers to any soul, whether Jewish or Gentile. Evidently, the movie's writers or producers were referring to this more general and universal passage, and not the more particular one quoted above. This passage appears in this universal form in more than just the Talmud. It also appears like this in three other places in rabbinic literature. This passage that refers to saving all people, whether Jewish or Gentile, can be found in Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer ch. 47, Eliyahu Rabbah 11, Yalkut Shimoni on Exodus 166.

In the Image of G-d

"And G-d said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... And G-d created man in His image, in the image of G-d He created him..."

"[F]or in His image did G-d make man."

Genesis (1:26-27; 9:6) - NJPS Translation

Four times, in three different verses, the Torah says that man was created in G-d's image. Exactly what this means, that man was created in G-d's image, is a matter with many different approaches. What we intend to do in this essay is to discuss 8 different philosophical explanations of this divine image that man has and then show that according to almost all opinions every person has a divine image. One possible exception will also be discussed. Due to the nature of this endeavour, we will be quoting both prominent and somewhat obscure philosophers. However, those familiar with Jewish philosophy will immediately recognize the more prominent names and their opinions (e.g. Maimonides).

Before we discuss these different understandings, it is important to note that some commentators do not read these verses as saying that man was created in G-d's image. Onkelos does not connect the words image and G-d, implying that G-d created man in **man's** image [cf. R. Avraham Ibn Ezra, Commentary to Genesis 1:26; R. Yitzchak Abarbanel, Commentary ad. loc, p. 68].

R. Sa'adia Gaon, in his *Emunot VeDeyot* (2:9, ed. Kaffih pp. 88-89) claims that the phrase "G-d's image" only implies uniqueness, similar to (Jeremiah 2:7) "My land" and (Isaiah 14:25) "My mountains" [In his translation of the Torah, R. Sa'adia Gaon offers a different explanation of this term].

Both R. Shmuel Ben Meir (Rashbam) and R. Avraham Ibn Ezra understand the word used for G-d, "Elokim", as referring here to angels, as it does in Judges (13:22). Thus, man was created in the image of angels.

1. Maimonides (Rambam) begins his *Moreh Nevuchim* by explaining this enigmatic phrase. He contends (1:1-2) that this refers to the human intellect, or rather the human intellectual process. Just like G-d, man can think and understand without any physical actions. This intellectual independence of thought is the "G-d's image" in which man was created [cf. Abarbanel, ibid., p.

67]. R. Shimon Ben Tzemach Duran (Rashbatz) in his *Magen Avot* (3:18) follows this approach as does R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller (*Tosafot Yom Tov*, Avot 3:14).

2. Somewhat similarly to Maimonides, R. Ovadiah Seforno (Commentary to Genesis 1:26-27) understands "G-d's image" as referring to man's eternal intellect. Aside from philosophical differences regarding the inherent nature of man's intellect, Seforno also differs with Maimonides by adding that distinct from the image of G-d, His "likeness" refers to free will. Only G-d and man have free will. R. Eliyahu Lopian (*Lev Eliyahu*, vol. 1 pp. 9-12) emphasizes this first aspect in Seforno's.

3. R. Chaim Friedlander (*Siftei Chaim* - Emunah Uvechirah, vol. 2 pp. 68, 90), on the other hand, focusses on the free will aspect. R. Yisrael Lifschitz (*Tiferet Yisrael*, Avot 3:89) and R. Meir Simchah HaCohen of Dvinsk (*Meshech Chochmah*, Genesis ad. loc.) also take the approach that "G-d's image" refers to free will. As does R. Meir Leibush Malbim (Commentary ad. loc.) and R. Aharon Kotler (*Peninim Mishulchan Gavoha*, Genesis ad. loc.).

4. Nachmanides (Ramban) in his Commentary to the Torah (Genesis ad. loc.) understands the plural of "Let us make", "our image", and "our likeness" as referring to both G-d and the Earth. G-d had the Earth form the human body while He formed the human soul to insert into the body. This soul, the "ruach", is the likeness and image of G-d.

5. R. Sa'adia Gaon, in his Arabic translation of the Torah, explains the term "G-d's image" as meaning the ability to conquer and rule. Just like G-d rules over all of creation, man rules over the animal world. This is consistent with the end of verse 26 where dominion over the animal kingdom is discussed.

6. R. Yitzchak Abarbanel (ibid. pp. 67-68) adds three additional interpretations. His first is that man, unlike other creatures, has four qualities. Man physically exists, grows, feels, and thinks. As the only creation that contains all of these qualities, man is similar to G-d, who contains every possible quality.

7. Abarbanel also suggests that man's physical parts are representative of the world and of G-d's actions. R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal) eloquently stated it thus (*Da'at Tevunot*, ed. Feldheim p. 115, ed. Friedlander ch. 80):

> For, in relation to all of the exalted qualities which we distinguish in the Blessed One is His acting on the level of His creatures, we find corresponding qualities in the figure of man. For example: the eye of man corresponds to the eye of Hid providence, which exercises surveillance over all the dwellers of the earth to judge all of their deeds... The ears of man correspond to G-d's sitting and listening to the prayers of men and to all of their praises... The mouth of man corresponds to G-d's speaking in a vision to His prophets... And, similarly, all of the other components of the body can be well understood as paralleling in their form and function the qualities to which He resorted in the making of His creations.

This understanding is also accepted by R. Natan Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka, in his *Or Hatzafun* (vol. 1 p. 216).

8. Abarbanel's third interpretation is based on the Maimonidean understanding of the intellect. Unlike Plato, Maimonides believes that man is born without innate knowledge but rather with the capacity to learn and know. In other words, man is born with a Potential Intellect and, with study, gains an Acquired Intellect. This Acquired Intellect, Abarbanel suggests, is the divine image. According to Abarbanel, Adam and Eve were the exceptions to the above rule. They were created fully developed, both physically and mentally. Therefore, Adam and Eve, and only they, were created in G-d's image. Every other person must work to develop his intellect into a diving image.

Do all people have G-d's image?

According to 1 through 7, all people, both Jewish and gentile, have G-d's image. All people have the same learning process, an eternal intellect, a soul, the ability to dominate animals, the qualities of existence, growth, feeling, and thought, and the same body parts.

Indeed, R. Avraham Grodzinsky wrote (*Torat Avraham*, p. 139):

> Not only Israel, but also all of the other nations, have the potential to reach the highest levels because they were created in the image of G-d. How wonderful are the words of the Tana devei Eliyahu, which says: I bear witness before heaven and earth, that Jew or Gentile, man

> or woman, slave or maidservant, all receive holy revelation according to their actions.

However, according to those in 3 who consider G-d's image to be free will, it is *possible* that there are those who do not have free will.

R. Chaim Lindenblatt has suggested to this author that according to Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Teshuvah 6:3) another category may lose their divine image. Maimonides states that there are those whose sin is so terrible that G-d removes from them the opportunity to repent. The prime example is Pharoah whose heart G-d repeatedly hardened (e.g. Exodus 14:4). Because Pharoah's sins were so grave, G-d removed from him the ability to repent i.e. his free will. Evidently, Pharoah and other sinners of that genre lose their divine image.

According to 8, it is clear that many, if not most, people do not have G-d's image because they have never acquired the requisite knowledge.

Before we end this essay, we must state that even according to the minority view mentioned here that some people do not have sufficient ability to act in G-d's image, it is absolutely forbidden to (G-d forbid) murder such people or to discriminate against them in any way. They are entirely human and MUST be treated with the dignity that all people deserve.

The Term “Goy”

It is frequently claimed that the term "Goy" (pl. goyim or goyyim) means "animal" and is therefore a derogatory term. However, this is not at all true. "Goy" is Hebrew for nation.

Exodus 19:6
"'But you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."

The word used here for nation, referring to the children of Israel, is "goy". There are countless examples of the Jewish nation being called "goy". There are also countless examples of other nations being called "goy" or "goyim".

See the Crosswalk Bible Lexicon entry for "Goy". Note that this is a Christian Bible site.

Colloquially, however, non-Jewish nations -- other nations -- are called "goyim" and a member of these nations is called a "goy". Any gentile is therefore called a "goy". It is not a derogatory term, but merely a descriptive term.

> Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yinglish* (New York:1989), pp. 205-206
>
> **goy**
> **goyish** (adjective)
> **goyim** (plural)
>
> What Yinglishman does not know, use and enjoy *goy*? Form rhyme respectively with "boy," "boyish," "doyen." The plural is pronounced GOY-*im*. The adjective is *goyish* (neuter), *goyisher* (masculine), or *goyisheh* (feminine). From the Hebrew: *goy*: "nation." Biblical texts called the Hebrews a *goy kadosh*: "a holy nation."
>
> 1. It is important to note that the idea of respect for others, and the values of a pluralistic society, form an old, integral part of Judaism and Jewish tradition. The rabbis taught that all men are equal in the eyes of G-d -- if they do the will of G-d: the Talmud says "Whether Jew or gentile, man or woman, rich or poor -- according to a man's *deeds* does G-d's presence rest on him."
>
> 2. Mormon call any non-Mormon a gentile; Jews are therefore gentiles to Mormons...
>
> 3. Just as some gentiles use "Jew" as a contemptuous synonym for driving too shrewd and sly a bargain ("He tried to Jew the price down," is about as odious an idiom as I know), so some Jews use *goy* in a pejorative sense. Relentless persecution of Jews, century after century, in nation after nation, left a legacy of bitter sayings...

Putting in my two cents to what R. Gil said - classification words are neutral. However, on connotation they can be positive or negative. Descriptive words naturally cause separation, separation isn't automatically about inferior and superior. From my understanding this article was made in 2000. I have heard the word goy used derogatorily. It is, however, typically used in the neutral sense. The word Jew has the same issue, just as pretty much every word to classify humans. Another two words ignored here are "shikseh" and "shaigetz". From my understanding, these words mean female abomination and male abomination. Many Jews use these all the time for nonJews. However, it should be noted most Jews have literally no idea that this is the case. Most use it also for classification words and know them to mean female nonJew and male nonJew. Intent matters, word meanings change overtime. From Wikipedia it seems that the word shiksa originally was used to mean an old hag or a seductress. In any case, I urge my fellow Jews to refrain from using such words seeped in vileness. G-d's creations are not abominations, especially not humanity. I also urge the antisemitic conspiracy theorists to realize "It's not that deep".

Rabbi Soloveitchik Was A Bible Expert

The Accusation

Rabbi Joseph D. Soloveitchik is regarded as one of the most influential rabbis of the 20th century, the "unchallenged leader" of Orthodox Judaism and the top international authority on *halakha* (Jewish religious law). Soloveitchik was responsible for instructing and ordaining more than 2,000 rabbis, "an entire generation" of Jewish leadership.

N.Y. Times religion reporter Ari Goldman described the basis of the rabbi's authority:

"Soloveitchik came from a long line of distinguished Talmudic scholars...Until his early 20s, he devoted himself almost exclusively to the study of the Talmud...He came to Yeshiva University's Elchanan Theological Seminary where he remained the pre-eminent teacher in the Talmud...He held the title of Leib Merkin professor of Talmud...sitting with his feet crossed in front of a table bearing an open volume of the Talmud." (*N.Y. Times*, April 10, 1993, p. 38).

Nowhere does Goldman refer to Soloveitchik's knowledge of the Bible as the basis for being one of the leading authorities on Jewish law.

Rabbi Soloveitchik was an expert in many fields. He was a world-class philosopher with a PhD from the University of Berlin. He was a linguist, speaking numerous languages with a keen insight into their grammatical structures. He was an expert in the Bible. Most of all, however, he was a brilliant talmudist. The Talmud is the area where his uniqueness was unparalleled and is what made his brilliance famous.

However, he was unquestionably a Bible expert. Much of his writings are laced with biblical insight. His books and essays include commentaries on the two creation stories, parts of 2 Samuel, Song of Songs, and many other biblical passages. Without this expertise he could never have been the most influential orthodox rabbi in America. Without his broad and deep knowledge of the Scriptures he would never have been taken seriously as a leading rabbi. However, just like every academic has their area of expertise, Rabbi Soloveitchik excelled in the complex and intricate world of the Talmud. This does not mean that he neglected the Bible. In fact, some of his students became Bible professors such as Rabbi Shalom Carmy and Rabbi Moshe Bernstein. However, unlike many rabbis in history like Rabbi David Kimchi or Rabbi Meir Leibush Malbim, Rabbi Soloveitchik's greatest contributions to Jewish law and literature are in the area of Talmud.

The following is taken from the index of just one of Rabbi Soloveitchik's many books and is a list of biblical verses quoted in that book. This alone should convince people that he was indeed a biblical expert.

Reflections of the Rav vol. I

Genesis
1:1 -- 21*
1:3 -- 26
1:5 -- 27
1:28 -- 26,174,177*
2:4 -- 13,21*
2:16-17 -- 19,22*
3:1 -- 19,22*
3:5 -- 130,137*
3:19 -- 19
3:21 -- 24,29*
6:11 -- 19-20,22*
12:5 -- 136,138*
15:2 -- 13,21*,49
15:8 -- 13,21*
15:18 -- 122-123
18:1 -- 30*
18:19 -- 213,217*
18:25 -- 95
23:4 -- 169,177*
24:12 -- 84
24:66 -- 121,126*
24:67 -- 121,126*
25:11 -- 30*
25:21 -- 84
25:31 -- 49
29:30 -- 119
29:31 -- 119
32:11 -- 49
32:17-18 -- 174,177*
42:9 -- 117,125*
44:30 -- 120
45:3 -- 67,70*

Exodus
2:23 -- 185
3:1 -- 185
3:10 -- 184,186*
3:11 -- 155
3:12 -- 159*,209,217*
4:28 -- 168*
5:22 -- 152,159*

6:3 -- 111,116*
6:6-7 -- 210
6:26 -- 168*
12:3 -- 203
12:43 -- 108,110,116*
13:1-10 -- 114,115
13:5 -- 118
13:8 -- 208,216*
13:11-16 -- 114,115
13:17-37 -- 37,39*,111,116*
16:16-18 -- 155,159*
17:16 -- 180,185*
18:12 -- 215,217
18:13 -- 51,58*
18:15 -- 214,217*
18:16 -- 57,58*
19:3 -- 213,217*
19:5 -- 119,126*
19:6 -- 156,126*
19:10 -- 25
19:20 -- 77,87*
20:1 -- 193,196*
20:8 -- 123
20:9 -- 19,22*
20:10 -- 22*,25,30*
21:19 -- 26
23:4-5 -- 191,196*
23:25 -- 87*
24:7 -- 89
32 -- 150
32:6 -- 58*
32:9 -- 90
32:9-10 -- 150-151
32:10 -- 158*
32:16 -- 206*
32:19 -- 101
32:30 -- 52,58*
33:4 -- 52,58*
33:11 -- 78,87*
33:18-23 -- 188,195*
33:20 -- 13,21*
35:31 -- 141,148

Leviticus
5:21 -- 194,196*
10:3 -- 103,106*
11:8 -- 100
14 -- 100
16:8 -- 42,50*
16:15-29 -- 100

18:4 -- 50*,100
18:5 -- 99,105,106*
19:2 -- 79
19:14 -- 191,196*
19:16 -- 195*
25:35 -- 28,30*
25:55 -- 204
26:32 -- 126*

Numbers
10:29 -- 125*
10:33 -- 154,159*
11: -- 150
11:4 -- 154159
11:5 -- 154-155
11:6 -- 155,159*
11:10 -- 152,155,159*
11:11 -- 151-152
11:11-15 -- 151,156,159*
11:12 -- 156,159*
11:32 -- 154,159*
12:2 -- 124
12:7 -- 124
12:13 -- 49
13:1-2 -- 125*
13:2 -- 117,126*
13:18 -- 118,125*
13:19 -- 118,125*
13:19-20 -- 118,126*
13:22 -- 123
13:33 -- 198
15:39 -- 154,159*
16 -- 139
16:3 -- 133,138*,140,148*
16:16-18 -- 155
19 -- 100
19:2 -- 108,116*
19:17 -- 109,114,116*
20:5 -- 210
20:29 -- 168
23:9 -- 172,177*

Deuteronomy
1:17 -- 132,137*
3:24 -- 83
4:9-10 -- 123
4:20 -- 189,195*
4:24 -- 24,29*
4:29 -- 165,168*,214,217*
5:10 -- 100

6:4-9 -- 114,115
6:5 -- 115
6:7 -- 26,30*,115
6:21 -- 197,206*
9:7 -- 123
10:20 -- 134,138*
11:12 -- 120,126*
11:13 -- 79,80,87*
11:13-21 -- 114,115
12:2 -- 124
13:5 -- 29*,137*
13:15 -- 24
14:23 -- 217*
16:3 -- 216*
16:13 -- 123
17:9-11 -- 161,168*
17:14-15 -- 127,131,137*
17:17 -- 127
17:20 -- 127,137*
22:8 -- 49,50*,196*
22:11 -- 100
24:9 -- 123
24:17-18 -- 190,195*
25:17 -- 123,180,185*
25:19 -- 180,185*
26:5 -- 207
26:5-10 -- 208,216*
28:9 -- 26,30*,137*
28:66 -- 200,206*
30:11 -- 61,69*
30:14 -- 61,69*
61:17 -- 65,36,39*
32:8-9 -- 26,30*
32:14 -- 9
33:5 -- 160,168*
34:6 -- 24,30*
34:8 -- 167
34:10 -- 124

Joshua
24:4 -- 111,116*

Judges
17:6 -- 130,137*

Samuel I
2:2 -- 73
8:1 -- 131
8:5 -- 128
8:7 -- 137*

8:20 -- 137*
15:15 -- 129,137*

Samuel II
8:15 -- 56,58*

Kings I
8:28 -- 77-78

Isaiah
48:10 -- 189,195*
49:16 -- 101,106*
54:13 -- 165,168*

Jeremiah
29:7 -- 170,177*

Joel
14:2 -- 79

Amos
2:6 -- 65,66,69*,70*

Jonah
1:3 -- 126*
3:8 -- 20,22*

Micah
4:5 -- 177,177*
6:8 -- 77,87*

Habakuk
3:6 -- 120,120*

Zechariah
8:16 -- 55,58*

Malachi
2:7 -- 134,138*,161,167,168*

Psalms
1:3 -- 73,164,168*
4:5 -- 98
24:1 -- 17,22*
30:6 -- 49,50*
41:10 -- 67,70*
42:2 -- 164,168*
65:3 -- 79,87*
82:1 -- 62,69*,132,137*
83:5 -- 180,185*
85:11 -- 168*
104:29-30 -- 37,39*

113:1 -- 83,88*
115:1 -- 83,88*
116:4 -- 83,88*
116:11 -- 70*
116:12 -- 83,88*
116:17 -- 83,88*
118:1 -- 83,88*
118:5 -- 81
119:80 -- 108,112,116*
121:1-2 -- 84,88*
130:3 -- 45,50*
136:1 -- 215
139:7 -- 126*
139:7-8 -- 101,106*

Proverbs
8:29 -- 102
17:14 -- 63,69*

Job
4:17 -- 45,50*
19:23-24 -- 101,106*

Ruth
1:16 -- 108,116*

Ecclesiastes
1:2 -- 85,88*
1:4 -- 85,88*
1:5 -- 29
1:8 -- 85,88*
1:9 -- 85,88*
1:18 -- 86
2:1 -- 86
2:18 -- 86
5:9 -- 86
9:12 -- 41,50*

Esther
3:8 -- 183,186*
3:10 -- 183,186*
3:15 -- 179,185*
4:1 -- 68,70*
4:13 -- 183,186*
4:16 -- 183,186*
5:13 -- 182,185*
9:27 -- 187,195*
9:28 -- 178,185*,188,195*

Chronicles I
29:11 -- 129,137

Ethics of Our Fathers

For whatever reason, R. Gil forgot to put the 6th chapter of Pirkei Avos in his link. What is Pirkei Avos? It's the Mishna/Talmud's book on Ethics and Morals. Whilst it has plenty of rich and beautiful rabbinical commentary, it is one of the few tractates in the Mishna with no Talmudic Tractate, meaning - the Rabbis didn't debate it. There is no debate on whether or not Pirkei Avos is questionable. Which is saying a lot. If you want to know Talmud's Ethics, read this book.

Chapter 1 -

1. Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly. They said three things: Be patient in [the administration of] justice, raise many disciples and make a fence round the Torah.
2. Shimon the Righteous was one of the last of the men of the great assembly. He used to say: the world stands upon three things: the Torah, the Temple service, and the practice of acts of piety.
3. Antigonus a man of Socho received [the oral tradition] from Shimon the Righteous. He used to say: do not be like servants who serve the master in the expectation of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve the master without the expectation of receiving a reward, and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.
4. Yose ben Yoezer (a man) of Zeredah and Yose ben Yohanan (a man) of Jerusalem received [the oral tradition] from them [i.e. Shimon the Righteous and Antigonus]. Yose ben Yoezer used to say: let thy house be a house of meeting for the Sages and sit in the very dust of their feet, and drink in their words with thirst.
5. Yose ben Yochanan (a man) of Jerusalem used to say: Let thy house be wide open, and let the poor be members of thy household. Engage not in too much conversation with women. They said this with regard to one's own wife, how much more [does the rule apply] with regard to another man's wife. From here the Sages said: as long as a man engages in too much conversation with women, he causes evil to himself, he neglects the study of the Torah, and in the end he will inherit gehinnom.
6. Joshua ben Perahiah and Nittai the Arbelite received [the oral tradition] from them. Joshua ben Perahiah used to say: appoint for thyself a teacher,

and acquire for thyself a companion and judge all men with the scale weighted in his favor.

7. Nittai the Arbelite used to say: keep a distance from an evil neighbor, do not become attached to the wicked, and do not abandon faith in [divine] retribution.
8. Judah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shetach received [the oral tradition] from them. Judah ben Tabbai said: do not [as a judge] play the part of an advocate; and when the litigants are standing before you, look upon them as if they were [both] guilty; and when they leave your presence, look upon them as if they were [both] innocent, when they have accepted the judgement.
9. Shimon ben Shetach used to say: be thorough in the interrogation of witnesses, and be careful with your words, lest from them they learn to lie.
10. Shemaiah and Abtalion received [the oral tradition] from them. Shemaiah used to say: love work, hate acting the superior, and do not attempt to draw near to the ruling authority.
11. Abtalion used to say: Sages be careful with your words, lest you incur the penalty of exile, and be carried off to a place of evil waters, and the disciples who follow you drink and die, and thus the name of heaven becomes profaned.
12. Hillel and Shammai received [the oral tradition] from them. Hillel used to say: be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and drawing them close to the Torah.
13. He [also] used to say: one who makes his name great causes his name to be destroyed; one who does not add [to his knowledge] causes [it] to cease; one who does not study [the Torah] deserves death; one who makes [unworthy] use of the crown [of learning] shall pass away.
14. He [also] used to say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self [only], what am I? And if not now, when?
15. Shammai used to say: make your [study of the] Torah a fixed practice; speak little, but do much; and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.
16. Rabban Gamaliel used to say: appoint for thyself a teacher, avoid doubt, and do not make a habit of tithing by guesswork.
17. Shimon, his son, used to say: all my days I grew up among the sages, and I have found nothing better for a person than silence. Study is not the

most important thing, but actions; whoever indulges in too many words brings about sin.

18. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel used to say: on three things does the world stand: On justice, on truth and on peace, as it is said: “execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zechariah 8:16)

Chapter 2 -

1. Rabbi said: which is the straight path that a man should choose for himself? One which is an honor to the person adopting it, and [on account of which] honor [accrues] to him from others. And be careful with a light commandment as with a grave one, for you did know not the reward for the fulfillment of the commandments. Also, reckon the loss [that may be sustained through the fulfillment] of a commandment against the reward [accruing] thereby, and the gain [that may be obtained through the committing] of a transgression against the loss [entailed] thereby. Apply your mind to three things and you will not come into the clutches of sin: Know what there is above you: an eye that sees, an ear that hears, and all your deeds are written in a book.
2. Rabban Gamaliel the son of Rabbi Judah Hanasi said: excellent is the study of the Torah when combined with a worldly occupation, for toil in them both keeps sin out of one’s mind; But [study of the] Torah which is not combined with a worldly occupation, in the end comes to be neglected and becomes the cause of sin. And all who labor with the community, should labor with them for the sake of Heaven, for the merit of their forefathers sustains them (the community), and their (the forefather’s) righteousness endures for ever; And as for you, [God in such case says] I credit you with a rich reward, as if you [yourselves] had [actually] accomplished [it all].
3. Be careful [in your dealings] with the ruling authorities for they do not befriend a person except for their own needs; they seem like friends when it is to their own interest, but they do not stand by a man in the hour of his distress.
4. He used to say: do His will as though it were your will, so that He will do your will as though it were His. Set aside your will in the face of His will, so that he may set aside the will of others for the sake of your will. Hillel said: do not separate yourself from the community, Do not trust in yourself until the day of your death, Do not judge your fellow man until you have reached his place. Do not say something that cannot be understood

[trusting] that in the end it will be understood. Say not: ‘when I shall have leisure I shall study;’ perhaps you will not have leisure.

5. He used to say: A brute is not sin-fearing, nor is an ignorant person pious; nor can a timid person learn, nor can an impatient person teach; nor will someone who engages too much in business become wise. In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.
6. Moreover he saw a skull floating on the face of the water. He said to it: because you drowned others, they drowned you. And in the end, they that drowned you will be drowned.
7. He used to say: The more flesh, the more worms; The more property, the more anxiety; The more wives, the more witchcraft; The more female slaves, the more lewdness; The more slaves, the more robbery; [But] the more Torah, the more life; The more sitting [in the company of scholars], the more wisdom; The more counsel, the more understanding; The more charity, the more peace. If one acquires a good name, he has acquired something for himself; If one acquires for himself knowledge of Torah, he has acquired life in the world to come.
8. Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai received [the oral tradition] from Hillel and Shammai. He used to say: if you have learned much Torah, do not claim credit for yourself, because for such a purpose were you created. Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai had five disciples and they were these: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, Rabbi Yose, the priest, Rabbi Shimon ben Nethaneel and Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach. He [Rabbi Johanan] used to list their outstanding virtues: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus is a plastered cistern which loses not a drop; Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah happy is the woman that gave birth to him; Rabbi Yose, the priest, is a pious man; Rabbi Simeon ben Nethaneel is one that fears sin, And Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach is like a spring that [ever] gathers force. He [Rabbi Yohanan] used to say: if all the sages of Israel were on one scale of the balance and Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus on the other scale, he would outweigh them all. Abba Shaul said in his name: if all the sages of Israel were on one scale of the balance, and Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus also with them, and Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach on the other scale, he would outweigh them all.
9. He [Rabban Yohanan] said unto them: go forth and observe which is the right way to which a man should cleave? Rabbi Eliezer said, a good eye; Rabbi Joshua said, a good companion; Rabbi Yose said, a good neighbor;

Rabbi Shimon said, foresight. Rabbi Elazar said, a good heart. He [Rabban Yohanan] said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach, for in his words your words are included. He [Rabban Yohanan] said unto them: go forth and observe which is the evil way which a man should shun? Rabbi Eliezer said, an evil eye; Rabbi Joshua said, an evil companion; Rabbi Yose said, an evil neighbor; Rabbi Shimon said, one who borrows and does not repay for he that borrows from man is as one who borrows from God, blessed be He, as it is said, “the wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous deal graciously and give” (Psalms 37:21). Rabbi Elazar said, an evil heart. He [Rabban Yohanan] said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach, for in his words your words are included.

10. They [each] said three things: Rabbi Eliezer said: Let the honor of your friend be as dear to you as your own; And be not easily provoked to anger; And repent one day before your death. And [he also said:] warm yourself before the fire of the wise, but beware of being singed by their glowing coals, for their bite is the bite of a fox, and their sting is the sting of a scorpion, and their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like coals of fire.
11. Rabbi Joshua said: an evil eye, the evil inclination, and hatred for humankind put a person out of the world.
12. Rabbi Yose said: Let the property of your fellow be as precious unto you as your own; Make yourself fit to study Torah for it will not be yours by inheritance; And let all your actions be for [the sake of] the name of heaven.
13. Rabbi Shimon said: Be careful with the reading of Shema and the prayer, And when you pray, do not make your prayer something automatic, but a plea for compassion before God, for it is said: “for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, and renouncing punishment” (Joel 2:13); And be not wicked in your own esteem.
14. Rabbi Elazar said: Be diligent in the study of the Torah; And know how to answer an epicuros, And know before whom you toil, and that your employer is faithful, for He will pay you the reward of your labor.
15. Rabbi Tarfon said: the day is short, and the work is plentiful, and the laborers are indolent, and the reward is great, and the master of the house is insistent.

16. He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it; If you have studied much Torah, you shall be given much reward. Faithful is your employer to pay you the reward of your labor; And know that the grant of reward unto the righteous is in the age to come.

Chapter 3 -

1. Akabyah ben Mahalalel said: mark well three things and you will not come into the power of sin: know from where you come, and where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give an account and reckoning. From where do you come? From a putrid drop. Where are you going? To a place of dust, of worm and of maggot. Before whom you are destined to give an account and reckoning? Before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.
2. Rabbi Hanina, the vice-high priest said: pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear it inspires, every man would swallow his neighbor alive. R. Hananiah ben Teradion said: if two sit together and there are no words of Torah [spoken] between them, then this is a session of scorners, as it is said: “nor sat he in the seat of the scornful…[rather, the teaching of the Lord is his delight]” (Psalms 1:1); but if two sit together and there are words of Torah [spoken] between them, then the Shekhinah abides among them, as it is said: “then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name” (Malachi 3:16). Now I have no [scriptural proof for the presence of the Shekhinah] except [among] two, how [do we know] that even one who sits and studies Torah the Holy One, blessed be He, fixes his reward? As it is said: “though he sit alone and [meditate] in stillness, yet he takes [a reward] unto himself” (Lamentations 3:28).
3. Rabbi Shimon said: if three have eaten at one table and have not spoken there words of Torah, [it is] as if they had eaten sacrifices [offered] to the dead, as it is said, “for all tables are full of filthy vomit, when the All-Present is absent” (Isaiah 28:8). But, if three have eaten at one table, and have spoken there words of Torah, [it is] as if they had eaten at the table of the All-Present, blessed be He, as it is said, “And He said unto me, ‘this is the table before the Lord’” (Ezekiel 41:22)

4. Rabbi Hananiah ben Hakinai said: one who wakes up at night, or walks on the way alone and turns his heart to idle matters, behold, this man is mortally guilty.
5. Rabbi Nehunia ben Hakkanah said: whoever takes upon himself the yoke of the Torah, they remove from him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly concerns, and whoever breaks off from himself the yoke of the Torah, they place upon him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly concerns.
6. Rabbi Halafta of Kefar Hanania said: when ten sit together and occupy themselves with Torah, the Shechinah abides among them, as it is said: “God stands in the congregation of God” (Psalm 82:1). How do we know that the same is true even of five? As it is said: “This band of His He has established on earth” (Amos 9:6). How do we know that the same is true even of three? As it is said: “In the midst of the judges He judges” (Psalm 82:1) How do we know that the same is true even of two? As it is said: “Then they that fear the Lord spoke one with another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard” (Malachi 3:16). How do we know that the same is true even of one? As it is said: “In every place where I cause my name to be mentioned I will come unto you and bless you” (Exodus 20:21).
7. Rabbi Elazar of Bartotha said: give to Him of that which is His, for you and that which is yours is His; and thus it says with regards to David: “for everything comes from You, and from Your own hand have we given you” (I Chronicles 29:14). Rabbi Jacob said: if one is studying while walking on the road and interrupts his study and says, “how fine is this tree!” [or] “how fine is this newly ploughed field!” scripture accounts it to him as if he was mortally guilty.
8. Rabbi Dostai ben Rabbi Yannai said in the name of Rabbi Meir: whoever forgets one word of his study, scripture accounts it to him as if he were mortally guilty, as it is said, “But take utmost care and watch yourselves scrupulously, so that you do not forget the things that you saw with your own eyes” (Deuteronomy 4:9). One could [have inferred that this is the case] even when his study proved [too] hard for him, therefore scripture says, “that they do not fade from your mind as long as you live” (ibid.). Thus, he is not mortally guilty unless he deliberately removes them from his heart.
9. Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa said: anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom is enduring, but anyone whose wisdom precedes his

fear of sin, his wisdom is not enduring. He [also] used to say: anyone whose deeds exceed his wisdom, his wisdom is enduring, but anyone whose wisdom exceeds his deeds, his wisdom is not enduring.

10. He used to say: one with whom men are pleased, God is pleased. But anyone from whom men are displeased, God is displeased. Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas said: morning sleep, midday wine, children's talk and sitting in the assemblies of the ignorant put a man out of the world.
11. Rabbi Elazar of Modiin said: one who profanes sacred things, and one who despises the festivals, and one who causes his fellow's face to blush in public, and one who annuls the covenant of our father Abraham, may he rest in peace, and he who is contemptuous towards the Torah, even though he has to his credit [knowledge of the] Torah and good deeds, he has not a share in the world to come.
12. Rabbi Ishmael said: be suppliant to a superior, submissive under compulsory service, and receive every man happily.
13. Rabbi Akiva said: Merriment and frivolity accustom one to sexual licentiousness; Tradition is a fence to the Torah; Tithes a fence to wealth, Vows a fence to abstinence; A fence to wisdom is silence.
14. He used to say: Beloved is man for he was created in the image [of God]. Especially beloved is he for it was made known to him that he had been created in the image [of God], as it is said: "for in the image of God He made man" (Genesis 9:6). Beloved are Israel in that they were called children to the All-Present. Especially beloved are they for it was made known to them that they are called children of the All-Present, as it is said: "you are children to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 14:1). Beloved are Israel in that a precious vessel was given to them. Especially beloved are they for it was made known to them that the desirable instrument, with which the world had been created, was given to them, as it is said: "for I give you good instruction; forsake not my teaching" (Proverbs 4:2).
15. Everything is foreseen yet freedom of choice is granted, And the world is judged with goodness; And everything is in accordance with the preponderance of works.
16. He used to say: everything is given against a pledge, and a net is spread out over all the living; the store is open and the storekeeper allows credit, but the ledger is open and the hand writes, and whoever wishes to borrow may come and borrow; but the collectors go round regularly every day and exact dues from man, either with his consent or without his

consent, and they have that on which they [can] rely [in their claims], seeing that the judgment is a righteous judgment, and everything is prepared for the banquet.

17. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said: Where there is no Torah, there is no right conduct; where there is no right conduct, there is no Torah. Where there is no wisdom, there is no fear of God; where there is no fear of God, there is no wisdom. Where there is no understanding, there is no knowledge; where there is no knowledge, there is no understanding. Where there is no bread, there is no Torah; where there is no Torah, there is no bread. He used to say: one whose wisdom exceeds his deeds, to what may he be compared? To a tree whose branches are numerous but whose roots are few, so that when the wind comes, it uproots it and overturns it, as it is said, “He shall be like a bush in the desert, which does not sense the coming of good. It is set in the scorched places of the wilderness, in a barren land without inhabitant” (Jeremiah 17:6). But one whose deeds exceed his wisdom, to what may he be compared? To a tree whose branches are few but roots are many, so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, they cannot move it out of its place, as it is said, “He shall be like a tree planted by waters, sending forth its roots by a stream. It does not sense the coming of heat, its leaves are ever fresh. It has no care in a year of drought; it does not cease to yield fruit” (ibid, 17:8).
18. Rabbi Eliezer Hisma said: the laws of mixed bird offerings and the key to the calculations of menstruation days, these are the body of the halakhah. The calculation of the equinoxes and gematria are the desserts of wisdom.

Chapter 4 -

1. Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? He who learns from every man, as it is said: “From all who taught me have I gained understanding” (Psalms 119:99). Who is mighty? He who subdues his [evil] inclination, as it is said: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city” (Proverbs 16:32). Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot, as it is said: “You shall enjoy the fruit of your labors, you shall be happy and you shall prosper” (Psalms 128:2) “You shall be happy” in this world, “and you shall prosper” in the world to come. Who is he that is honored? He who honors his fellow human beings as it is said: “For I honor those

that honor Me, but those who spurn Me shall be dishonored" (I Samuel 2:30).

2. Ben Azzai said: Be quick in performing a minor commandment as in the case of a major one, and flee from transgression; For one commandment leads to another commandment, and transgression leads to another transgression; For the reward for performing a commandment is another commandment and the reward for committing a transgression is a transgression.
3. He used to say: do not despise any man, and do not discriminate against anything, for there is no man that has not his hour, and there is no thing that has not its place.
4. Rabbi Levitas a man of Yavneh said: be exceeding humble spirit, for the end of man is the worm. Rabbi Yohanan ben Berokah said: whoever profanes the name of heaven in secret, he shall be punished in the open. Unwittingly or wittingly, it is all one in profaning the name.
5. Rabbi Ishmael his son said: He who learns in order to teach, it is granted to him to study and to teach; But he who learns in order to practice, it is granted to him to learn and to teach and to practice. Rabbi Zadok said: do not make them a crown for self-exaltation, nor a spade with which to dig. So too Hillel used to say, "And he that puts the crown to his own use shall perish." Thus you have learned, anyone who derives worldly benefit from the words of the Torah, removes his life from the world.
6. Rabbi Yose said: whoever honors the Torah is himself honored by others, and whoever dishonors the Torah is himself dishonored by others.
7. Rabbi Ishmael his son said: he who refrains himself from judgment, rids himself of enmity, robbery and false swearing; But he whose heart is presumptuous in giving a judicial decision, is foolish, wicked and arrogant.
8. He used to say: judge not alone, for none may judge alone save one. And say not "accept my view", for they are free but not you.
9. Rabbi Jonathan said: whoever fulfills the Torah out of a state of poverty, his end will be to fulfill it out of a state of wealth; And whoever discards the Torah out of a state of wealth, his end will be to discard it out of a state of poverty.
10. Rabbi Meir said: Engage but little in business, and busy yourself with the Torah. Be of humble spirit before all men. If you have neglected the Torah, you shall have many who bring you to neglect it, but if you have labored at the study of Torah, there is much reward to give unto you

11. Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob said: he who performs one commandment acquires for himself one advocate, and he who commits one transgression acquires for himself one accuser. Repentance and good deeds are a shield against punishment. Rabbi Yochanan Hasandlar said: every assembly which is for the sake of heaven, will in the end endure; and every assembly which is not for the sake of heaven, will not endure in the end.
12. Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua said: let the honor of your student be as dear to you as your own, and the honor of your colleague as the reverence for your teacher, and the reverence for your teacher as the reverence of heaven.
13. Rabbi Judah said: be careful in study, for an error in study counts as deliberate sin. Rabbi Shimon said: There are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty, but the crown of a good name supersedes them all.
14. Rabbi Nehorai said: go as a [voluntary] exile to a place of Torah and say not that it will come after you, for [it is] your fellow [student]s who will make it permanent in your hand and “and lean not upon your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5).
15. Rabbi Yannai said: it is not in our hands [to explain the reason] either of the security of the wicked, or even of the afflictions of the righteous. Rabbi Mathia ben Harash said: Upon meeting people, be the first to extend greetings; And be a tail unto lions, and not a head unto foxes.
16. Rabbi Jacob said: this world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare yourself in the vestibule, so that you may enter the banqueting-hall.
17. He used to say: more precious is one hour in repentance and good deeds in this world, than all the life of the world to come; And more precious is one hour of the tranquility of the world to come, than all the life of this world.
18. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: Do not try to appease your friend during his hour of anger; Nor comfort him at the hour while his dead still lies before him; Nor question him at the hour of his vow; Nor strive to see him in the hour of his disgrace.
19. Shmuel Hakatan said: “If your enemy falls, do not exult; if he trips, let your heart not rejoice, lest the Lord see it and be displeased, and avert his wrath from him” (Proverbs 24:17).

20. Elisha ben Abuyah said: He who learns when a child, to what is he compared? To ink written upon a new writing sheet. And he who learns when an old man, to what is he compared? To ink written on a rubbed writing sheet. Rabbi Yose ben Judah a man of Kfar Ha-babli said: He who learns from the young, to what is he compared? To one who eats unripe grapes, and drinks wine from his vat; And he who learns from the old, to what is he compared? To one who eats ripe grapes, and drinks old wine. Rabbi said: don't look at the container but at that which is in it: there is a new container full of old wine, and an old [container] in which there is not even new [wine].
21. Rabbi Elazar Ha-kappar said: envy, lust and [the desire for] honor put a man out of the world.
22. He used to say: the ones who were born are to die, and the ones who have died are to be brought to life, and the ones brought to life are to be judged; So that one may know, make known and have the knowledge that He is God, He is the designer, He is the creator, He is the discerner, He is the judge, He the witness, He the complainant, and that He will summon to judgment. Blessed be He, before Whom there is no iniquity, nor forgetting, nor respect of persons, nor taking of bribes, for all is His. And know that all is according to the reckoning. And let not your impulse assure thee that the grave is a place of refuge for you; for against your will were you formed, against your will were you born, against your will you live, against your will you will die, and against your will you will give an account and reckoning before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

Chapter 5 -

1. With ten utterances the world was created. And what does this teach, for surely it could have been created with one utterance? But this was so in order to punish the wicked who destroy the world that was created with ten utterances, And to give a good reward to the righteous who maintain the world that was created with ten utterances.
2. [There were] ten generations from Adam to Noah, in order to make known what long-suffering is His; for all those generations kept on provoking Him, until He brought upon them the waters of the flood. [There were] ten generations from Noah to Abraham, in order to make known what long-suffering is His; for all those generations kept on provoking Him, until Abraham, came and received the reward of all of them.

3. With ten trials was Abraham, our father (may he rest in peace), tried, and he withstood them all; to make known how great was the love of Abraham, our father (peace be upon him).
4. Ten miracles were wrought for our ancestors in Egypt, and ten at the sea. Ten plagues did the Holy one, blessed be He, bring upon the Egyptians in Egypt and ten at the sea. [With] ten trials did our ancestors try God, blessed be He, in the Wilderness, as it is said, “and they have tried Me these ten times and they have not listened to my voice” (Numbers 14:22).
5. Ten wonders were wrought for our ancestors in the Temple: [1] no woman miscarried from the odor of the sacred flesh; [2] the sacred flesh never became putrid; [3] no fly was ever seen in the slaughterhouse; [4] no emission occurred to the high priest on the Day of Atonement; [5] the rains did not extinguish the fire of the woodpile; [6] the wind did not prevail against the column of smoke; [7] no defect was found in the omer, or in the two loaves, or in the showbread; [8] the people stood pressed together, yet bowed down and had room enough; [9] never did a serpent or a scorpion harm anyone in Jerusalem; [10] and no man said to his fellow: the place is too congested for me to lodge overnight in Jerusalem.
6. Ten things were created on the eve of the Sabbath at twilight, and these are they: [1] the mouth of the earth, [2] the mouth of the well, [3] the mouth of the donkey, [4] the rainbow, [5] the manna, [6] the staff [of Moses], [7] the shamir, [8] the letters, [9] the writing, [10] and the tablets. And some say: also the demons, the grave of Moses, and the ram of Abraham, our father. And some say: and also tongs, made with tongs.
7. [There are] seven things [characteristic] in a clod, and seven in a wise man: A wise man does not speak before one who is greater than he in wisdom, And does not break into his fellow’s speech; And is not hasty to answer; He asks what is relevant, and he answers to the point; And he speaks of the first [point] first, and of the last [point] last; And concerning that which he has not heard, he says: I have not heard; And he acknowledges the truth. And the reverse of these [are characteristic] in a clod.
8. Seven kinds of punishment come to the world for seven categories of transgression:When some of them give tithes, and others do not give tithes, a famine from drought comes, some go hungry, and others are satisfied. When they have all decided not to give tithes, a famine from tumult and drought comes; [When they have, in addition, decided] not to

set apart the dough-offering, an all-consuming famine comes. Pestilence comes to the world for sins punishable by death according to the Torah, but which have not been referred to the court, and for neglect of the law regarding the fruits of the sabbatical year. The sword comes to the world for the delay of judgment, and for the perversion of judgment, and because of those who teach the Torah not in accordance with the accepted law.

9. Wild beasts come to the world for swearing in vain, and for the profanation of the Name. Exile comes to the world for idolatry, for sexual sins and for bloodshed, and for [transgressing the commandment of] the [year of the] release of the land. At four times pestilence increases: in the fourth year, in the seventh year and at the conclusion of the seventh year, and at the conclusion of the Feast [of Tabernacles] in every year. In the fourth year, on account of the tithe of the poor which is due in the third year. In the seventh year, on account of the tithe of the poor which is due in the sixth year; At the conclusion of the seventh year, on account of the produce of the seventh year; And at the conclusion of the Feast [of Tabernacles] in every year, for robbing the gifts to the poor.
10. There are four types of character in human beings: One that says: “mine is mine, and yours is yours”: this is a commonplace type; and some say this is a sodom-type of character. [One that says:] “mine is yours and yours is mine”: is an unlearned person (am haaretz); [One that says:] “mine is yours and yours is yours” is a pious person. [One that says:] “mine is mine, and yours is mine” is a wicked person.
11. There are four kinds of temperaments: Easy to become angry, and easy to be appeased: his gain disappears in his loss; Hard to become angry, and hard to be appeased: his loss disappears in his gain; Hard to become angry and easy to be appeased: a pious person; Easy to become angry and hard to be appeased: a wicked person.
12. There are four types of disciples: Quick to comprehend, and quick to forget: his gain disappears in his loss; Slow to comprehend, and slow to forget: his loss disappears in his gain; Quick to comprehend, and slow to forget: he is a wise man; Slow to comprehend, and quick to forget, this is an evil portion.
13. There are four types of charity givers. He who wishes to give, but that others should not give: his eye is evil to that which belongs to others; He who wishes that others should give, but that he himself should not give: his eye is evil towards that which is his own; He who desires that he himself

should give, and that others should give: he is a pious man; He who desires that he himself should not give and that others too should not give: he is a wicked man.

14. There are four types among those who frequent the study-house (bet midrash):He who attends but does not practice: he receives a reward for attendance. He who practices but does not attend: he receives a reward for practice. He who attends and practices: he is a pious man; He who neither attends nor practices: he is a wicked man.
15. There are four types among those who sit before the sages: a sponge, a funnel, a strainer and a sieve.A sponge, soaks up everything; A funnel, takes in at one end and lets out at the other; A strainer, which lets out the wine and retains the lees; A sieve, which lets out the coarse meal and retains the choice flour.
16. All love that depends on a something, [when the] thing ceases, [the] love ceases; and [all love] that does not depend on anything, will never cease. What is an example of love that depended on a something? Such was the love of Amnon for Tamar. And what is an example of love that did not depend on anything? Such was the love of David and Jonathan.
17. Every dispute that is for the sake of Heaven, will in the end endure; But one that is not for the sake of Heaven, will not endure. Which is the controversy that is for the sake of Heaven? Such was the controversy of Hillel and Shammai. And which is the controversy that is not for the sake of Heaven? Such was the controversy of Korah and all his congregation.
18. Whoever causes the multitudes to be righteous, sin will not occur on his account; And whoever causes the multitudes to sin, they do not give him the ability to repent. Moses was righteous and caused the multitudes to be righteous, [therefore] the righteousness of the multitudes is hung on him, as it is said, “He executed the Lord’s righteousness and His decisions with Israel” (Deut. 33:21). Jeroboam, sinned and caused the multitudes to sin, [therefore] the sin of the multitudes is hung on him, as it is said, “For the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he caused Israel to sin thereby” (I Kings 15:30).
19. Whoever possesses these three things, he is of the disciples of Abraham, our father; and [whoever possesses] three other things, he is of the disciples of Balaam, the wicked. A good eye, a humble spirit and a moderate appetite he is of the disciples of Abraham, our father. An evil eye, a haughty spirit and a limitless appetite he is of the disciples of

Balaam, the wicked. What is the difference between the disciples of Abraham, our father, and the disciples of Balaam, the wicked? The disciples of Abraham, our father, enjoy this world, and inherit the world to come, as it is said: “I will endow those who love me with substance, I will fill their treasuries” (Proverbs 8:21). But the disciples of Balaam, the wicked, inherit Gehinnom, and descend into the nethermost pit, as it is said: “For you, O God, will bring them down to the nethermost pit those murderous and treacherous men; they shall not live out half their days; but I trust in You” (Psalms 55:24).

20. Judah ben Tema said: Be strong as a leopard, and swift as an eagle, and fleet as a gazelle, and brave as a lion, to do the will of your Father who is in heaven. He used to say: the arrogant is headed for Gehinnom and the blushing for the garden of Eden. May it be the will, O Lord our God, that your city be rebuilt speedily in our days and set our portion in the studying of your Torah.
21. He used to say: At five years of age the study of Scripture; At ten the study of Mishnah; At thirteen subject to the commandments; At fifteen the study of Talmud; At eighteen the bridal canopy; At twenty for pursuit [of livelihood]; At thirty the peak of strength; At forty wisdom; At fifty able to give counsel; At sixty old age; At seventy fullness of years; At eighty the age of “strength”; At ninety a bent body; At one hundred, as good as dead and gone completely out of the world.
22. Ben Bag Bag said: Turn it over, and [again] turn it over, for all is therein. And look into it; And become gray and old therein; And do not move away from it, for you have no better portion than it.
23. Ben He He said: According to the labor is the reward.

Chapter 6 -

1. The sages taught in the language of the Mishnah. Blessed be He who chose them and their teaching. Rabbi Meir said: Whoever occupies himself with the Torah for its own sake, merits many things; not only that but he is worth the whole world. He is called beloved friend; one that loves God; one that loves humankind; one that gladdens God; one that gladdens humankind. And the Torah clothes him in humility and reverence, and equips him to be righteous, pious, upright and trustworthy; it keeps him far from sin, and brings him near to merit. And people benefit from his counsel, sound

knowledge, understanding and strength, as it is said, “Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, strength is mine” (Proverbs 8:14). And it bestows upon him royalty, dominion, and acuteness in judgment. To him are revealed the secrets of the Torah, and he is made as an ever-flowing spring, and like a stream that never ceases. And he becomes modest, long-suffering and forgiving of insult. And it magnifies him and exalts him over everything.

2. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: every day a bat kol (a heavenly voice) goes forth from Mount Horeb and makes proclamation and says: “Woe unto humankind for their contempt towards the Torah”, for whoever does not occupy himself with the study of Torah is called, nazuf (the rebuked. As it is said, “Like a gold ring in the snout of a pig is a beautiful woman bereft of sense” (Proverbs 11:22). And it says, “And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tablets” (Exodus 32:16). Read not haruth [‘graven’] but heruth [‘freedom’]. For there is no free man but one that occupies himself with the study of the Torah. And whoever regularly occupies himself with the study of the Torah he is surely exalted, as it is said, “And from Mattanah to Nahaliel; and Nahaliel to Bamoth” (Numbers 21:19).
3. One who learns from his fellow one chapter, or one halakhah, or one verse, or one word, or even one letter, is obligated to treat him with honor; for so we find with David, king of Israel, who learned from Ahitophel no more than two things, yet called him his master, his guide and his beloved friend, as it is said, “But it was you, a man mine equal, my guide and my beloved friend” (Psalms 55:14). Is this not [an instance of the argument] “from the less to the greater” (kal vehomer)? If David, king of Israel who learned from Ahitophel no more than two things, nevertheless called him his master, his guide and his beloved friend; then in the case of one who learns from his fellow one chapter, or one halakhah, or one verse, or one word, or even one letter, all the more so he is under obligation to treat him with honor. And “honor’” means nothing but Torah, as it is said, “It is honor that sages inherit” (Proverbs 3:35). “And the perfect shall inherit good” (Proverbs 28:10), and “good” means nothing but Torah, as it is said, “For I give you good instruction; do not forsake my Torah” (Proverbs 4:2).

4. Such is the way [of a life] of Torah: you shall eat bread with salt, and rationed water shall you drink; you shall sleep on the ground, your life will be one of privation, and in Torah shall you labor. If you do this, “Happy shall you be and it shall be good for you” (Psalms 128:2): “Happy shall you be” in this world, “and it shall be good for you” in the world to come.
5. Do not seek greatness for yourself, and do not covet honor. Practice more than you learn. Do not yearn for the table of kings, for your table is greater than their table, and your crown is greater than their crown, and faithful is your employer to pay you the reward of your labor.
6. Greater is learning Torah than the priesthood and than royalty, for royalty is acquired by thirty stages, and the priesthood by twenty-four, but the Torah by forty-eight things. By study, Attentive listening, Proper speech, By an understanding heart, By an intelligent heart, By awe, By fear, By humility, By joy, By attending to the sages, By critical give and take with friends, By fine argumentation with disciples, By clear thinking, By study of Scripture, By study of Mishnah, By a minimum of sleep, By a minimum of chatter, By a minimum of pleasure, By a minimum of frivolity, By a minimum of preoccupation with worldly matters, By long-suffering, By generosity, By faith in the sages, By acceptance of suffering. [Learning of Torah is also acquired by one] Who recognizes his place, Who rejoices in his portion, Who makes a fence about his words, Who takes no credit for himself, Who is loved, Who loves God, Who loves [his fellow] creatures, Who loves righteous ways, Who loves reproof, Who loves uprightness, Who keeps himself far from honors, Who does not let his heart become swelled on account of his learning, Who does not delight in giving legal decisions, Who shares in the bearing of a burden with his colleague, Who judges with the scales weighted in his favor, Who leads him on to truth, Who leads him on to peace, Who composes himself at his study, Who asks and answers, Who listens [to others], and [himself] adds [to his knowledge], Who learns in order to teach, Who learns in order to practice, Who makes his teacher wiser, Who is exact in what he has learned, And who says a thing in the name of him who said it. Thus you have learned: everyone who says a thing

in the name of him who said it, brings deliverance into the world, as it is said: “And Esther told the king in Mordecai’s name” (Esther 2:22).

7. Great is Torah for it gives life to those that practice it, in this world, and in the world to come, As it is said: “For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh” (Proverbs 4:22), And it says: “It will be a cure for your navel and marrow for your bones” (ibid. 3:8) And it says: “She is a tree of life to those that grasp her, and whoever holds onto her is happy” (ibid. 3:18), And it says: “For they are a graceful wreath upon your head, a necklace about your throat” (ibid. 1:9), And it says: “She will adorn your head with a graceful wreath; crown you with a glorious diadem” (ibid. 4:9) And it says: “In her right hand is length of days, in her left riches and honor” (ibid. 3:1, And it says: “For they will bestow on you length of days, years of life and peace” (ibid. 3:2).
8. Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: Beauty, strength, riches, honor, wisdom, [old age], gray hair, and children are becoming to the righteous, and becoming to the world, As it is said: “Gray hair is a crown of glory (beauty); it is attained by way of righteousness” (Proverbs 16:31), And it says: “The ornament of the wise is their wealth” (ibid. 14:24), And it says: “The glory of youths is their strength; and the beauty of old men is their gray hair” (ibid. 20:29), And it says: “Grandchildren are the glory of their elders, and the glory of children is their parents” (ibid. 17:6), And it says: “Then the moon shall be ashamed, and the sun shall be abashed. For the Lord of Hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and God’s Honor will be revealed to his elders” (Isaiah 24:23). Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya said: these seven qualities, which the sages have listed [as becoming] to the righteous, were all of them fulfilled in Rabbi and his sons.
9. Rabbi Yose ben Kisma said: Once I was walking by the way when a man met me, and greeted me and I greeted him. He said to me, “Rabbi, where are you from?” I said to him, “I am from a great city of sages and scribes”. He said to me, “Rabbi, would you consider living with us in our place? I would give you a thousand thousand denarii of gold, and precious stones and pearls.” I said to him: “My son, even if you were to give me all the silver and gold, precious stones

and pearls that are in the world, I would not dwell anywhere except in a place of Torah; for when a man passes away there accompany him neither gold nor silver, nor precious stones nor pearls, but Torah and good deeds alone, as it is said, “When you walk it will lead you. When you lie down it will watch over you; and when you are awake it will talk with you” (Proverbs 6:22). “When you walk it will lead you” in this world. “When you lie down it will watch over you” in the grave; “And when you are awake it will talk with you” in the world to come. And thus it is written in the book of Psalms by David, king of Israel, “I prefer the teaching You proclaimed to thousands of pieces of gold and silver” (Psalms 119:72), And it says: “Mine is the silver, and mine the gold, says the Lord of Hosts” (Haggai 2:8).

10. Five possessions did the Holy Blessed One, set aside as his own in this world, and these are they: The Torah, one possession; Heaven and earth, another possession; Abraham, another possession; Israel, another possession; The Temple, another possession. 1a) The Torah is one possession. From where do we know this? Since it is written, “The Lord possessed (usually translated as ‘created’) me at the beginning of his course, at the first of His works of old” (Proverbs 8:22). 2a) Heaven and earth, another possession. From where do we know this? Since it is said: “Thus said the Lord: The heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool; Where could you build a house for Me, What place could serve as My abode? (Isaiah 66:1) And it says: “How many are the things You have made, O Lord; You have made them all with wisdom; the earth is full of Your possessions” (Psalms 104:24). 3a) Abraham is another possession. From where do we know this? Since it is written: “He blessed him, saying, “Blessed by Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14:19). 4a) Israel is another possession. From where do we know this? Since it is written: “Till Your people cross over, O Lord, Till Your people whom You have possessed” (Exodus 15:16). And it says: “As to the holy and mighty ones that are in the land, my whole desire (possession) is in them” (Psalms 16:3). 5a) The Temple is another possession. From where do we know this? Since it is said: “The sanctuary, O lord, which your hands have established” (Exodus 15:17”, And it

says: “And He brought them to His holy realm, to the mountain, which His right hand had possessed” (Psalms 78:54).

11. Whatever the Holy Blessed One created in His world, he created only for His glory, as it is said: “All who are linked to My name, whom I have created, formed and made for My glory” (Isaiah 43:7), And it says: “The Lord shall reign for ever and ever” (Exodus 15:18).

    Said Rabbi Hananiah ben Akashya: It pleased the Holy Blessed One to grant merit to Israel, that is why He gave them Torah and commandments in abundance, as it is said, “The Lord was pleased for His righteousness, to make Torah great and glorious” (Isaiah 42:21).

Shabbat and Gentile Lives

by Gil Student

I

The recent passing of Dr. Israel Shahak[*] marks the end of a very controversial career. Dr. Shahak, a chemistry professor and human rights activist who spent a lifetime criticizing Israel's treatment of Palestinians, will probably be best remembered for his theories about the basis of the treatment he so denounced. He proposed that Israel's relations with Palestinians are based on a history of religious racism. Jews, Shahak claims, have been so conditioned by their religion to hate Gentiles that even the anti-religious Zionists have retained this aspect of their Jewish heritage. Through scholarship with which an average Yeshiva student can find fault, Shahak culled source after source from Talmud and halakhah that he claimed demonstrated that Judaism is a fundamentally racist and hateful religion[1]. While his scholarship may have been less than rigorous, some of his points hit close to mark. It behooves us, as sensitive Jews devoted to halakhah, to examine his work and attempt to wade through the mistakes and evaluate whether, indeed, he may have raised issues of concern. This is certainly not an attempt to redeem the legacy of a man who has caused so much anti-Jewish hatred and violence. It is an effort to learn from one of our critics.

This author is not arrogant enough to try to judge Judaism based on whatever artificial values are currently popular. However, the attempt to understand Judaism based on the ideals of our contemporary society serves a number of purposes. The first is to note contradictions between these ideals and those of the Torah as we understand it. As Jews committed to Torah, we need to know when our values are not the same as those of the society around us, if not for our own understanding then to know what to reject from the outside world. Second, if one particular aspect of Torah seems to contradict a value that emanates from another part of Torah then we need to resolve this conflict. And third, this effort can help us arrive at a deeper understanding of Torah. We hope that this essay will fulfill all three goals on its chosen topic.

More than anything, the episode that propelled Dr. Shahak into the international spotlight was his claim to have witnessed in 1965 an injured Gentile left to die because an Orthodox Jew would not allow his telephone to be used on Shabbat to call for help[2]. While it is certainly difficult to understand exactly what prohibition is involved in allowing someone else to use one's telephone on Shabbat[3], Shahak claims that he contacted a rabbinic court that confirmed that this Orthodox Jew's actions were appropriate and even pious. Subsequent to this, Shahak alerted the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz which reported his story and thrust this episode into the public view. Attempts to verify Shahak's story have failed and no deceased Gentile or rabbinic court could be identified as having taken part in this tale[4]. However, this did not deter the story from spreading and creating controversy.

The details of the story, or whether it even happened, are not relevant right now. What is important is the idea that Shahak so maliciously tried to demonstrate. Let us, therefore, examine this issue. May we violate Shabbat in order to save someone's life and, if so, why and for whose life?

II

It has become ingrained within the Jewish psyche, and rightly so, that Shabbat must be violated to save a life. The proverbial "man on the street" will not hesitate to report that *pikuah nefesh* overrides Shabbat considerations. However, while the practical rule is well known, the halakhic reasoning behind it is probably not as famous. Many will likely explain that human life is more important than Shabbat, and, as we shall see, there is basis for this explanation[5]. Is this reason correct? Let us examine it. (To avoid confusion, let us state at the outset that we will conclude that this reason is incorrect.)

This explanation requires immediate qualification when it is noted that, at least theoretically, Shabbat may not be violated for a Gentile[6]. While the ruling that allows violating Shabbat to save the life of a Gentile has been generally accepted[7], it is for an ancillary reason and does not contradict the theoretical premise that Shabbat should not be violated to save a Gentile. Therefore, the reasoning behind *pikuah nefesh* must be amended to state that a Jewish life is more important than Shabbat.

From this theoretical stance, Dr. Shahak inferred that Gentile lives are unimportant to Judaism. But is this true? Does the evidence support this explanation?

Evidently not, when it is noted that, theoretically, Shabbat may not be violated to save the life of a non-observant Jew[8]. While again, for an ancillary reason, Shabbat is violated[9], the common explanation for *pikuah nefesh* must be modified to state that only the life of an observant Jew is more important than Shabbat. This alone disproves Shahak's inference. The permission to violate Shabbat is not dependent on race or religion because non-observant Jews are included with Gentiles.

To complicate matters even more, Ramban[10] writes that we violate Shabbat to save a Ger Toshav, a Gentile who has officially accepted on himself to live a righteous life. It now seems that some Gentile lives and some Jewish lives are more important than Shabbat and some not. The logic that *pikuah nefesh* is about the importance of lives is no longer as compelling as it once was. Indeed, we would be remiss if we did not search for a more viable explanation.

As we shall see, a close reading of the sources shows that there is no evaluation that some lives are more important than Shabbat while others are not. There is no implicit message that Gentile lives are less significant than Jewish lives. No life is more important than Shabbat. What are more important are the future commandments that a person will observe. In other words, the one commandment of Shabbat may be violated to allow someone to fulfill many commandments in the future. No life, whether Jewish, Gentile, observant, or non-observant, is more important than following the G-d-given laws of Shabbat. However, many commandments are more important than one commandment and only they can override the Shabbat regulations.

The *locus classicus* for the source of why saving a life overrides Shabbat is a passage in Yoma (85a-b) in which six Tannaitic and one Amoraic reasons are given. The last Tannaitic reason is as follows:

> R. Shimon ben Menasia said: "The Children of Israel shall observe the Shabbat [to make the Shabbat an eternal covenant for

> generations]" (Exodus 31:16) The Torah said to violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many future Shabbatot.

According to R. Shimon ben Menasia, part of observing any given Shabbat is the making of Shabbat into an eternal covenant. In the case of saving someone's life, violating Shabbat to save the endangered and allow him to observe future Shabbatot serves more to make Shabbat an eternal covenant than observing Shabbat and allowing the person to die[11]. However, the Talmud notes that this only applies to someone who will definitely observe many future Shabbatot. The Scriptural exegesis only permits violation of one Shabbat when there is a certainty that this will lead to the observance of many future Shabbatot. When there is a doubt, for example a terminally ill patient who may not live until the next Shabbat, the verse gives no permission to violate Shabbat regulations. Therefore, the conclusion of the Talmudic passage is that only the Amoraic reason of Shmuel satisfies all of the questions. Shmuel is quoted by R. Yehudah as saying:

> "And live by them" (Leviticus 18:5) and not that one should die by them.

The implication is unclear but seems to be that one's observance of Torah commandments should not lead to one's death. How this leads to the conclusion that one person can violate Shabbat to save another person is not explained[12]. However, the Talmud assumes that this applies even to a case of doubt.

III

1) It appears from the passage that all of the Tannaitic reasons are rejected, including R. Shimon ben Menasia's, because they do not apply to cases of doubt[13]. Shmuel's reason is accepted as authoritative and is the one most familiar to the average Jew. With this in mind, the following passage from Shabbat (151b) is quite surprising.

> It is taught: R. Shimon ben Gamliel said, "We violate Shabbat for a one day old baby. The Torah said to violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many Shabbatot."

If this reason has been rejected, why is it brought again? Why does the Talmud not note that it is rejected and bring Shmuel's reason? While it can be argued that this entire passage disagrees with that in Yoma or was composed prior to it, the following post-Talmudic statements cannot be dismissed in that way.

2) The author of *Halakhot Gedolot*[14] says that Shabbat may be violated even to save a fetus. Ramban[15] explains that even though a fetus is not a person and someone who kills it is not executed[16], we still say “Violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many Shabbatot."Surely Ramban knew that this reason was rejected in Yoma.

3) While discussing the emergency powers of the high court, Rambam[17] writes that the court can temporarily suspend a commandment or prohibition if this action will serve to keep many in the fold or assist many to return to Judaism. Rambam concludes with the following:

> Just like a doctor will cut off someone's arm or leg so that his totality will live, so too the court can rule at certain times to temporarily violate some commandments in order that they will all [eventually] be fulfilled. It is like the early sages said, “Violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many Shabbatot."

Again, we see this rejected opinion quoted. Here, it is cited not because of its exegetical merit but because of its compelling logic. This will prove to be significant.

4) R. Menahem Meiri, in his commentary to the Mishnah in Yoma (83a), writes that we violate Shabbat to extend a dying person’s life, even minimally, because in that short time he may repent and confess his sins (to G-d). This seems to imply that the reason for violating Shabbat is not that the temporary life is more important. Rather, the potential mitzvah[18] Yet, that seems to be R. Shimon ben Menasia’s reject view.

5) R. Yosef Karo in his *Beit Yosef*[19] deals with the unfortunate case of a young girl who is kidnapped by Christians, a not uncommon occurrence in Medieval Europe. May Shabbat be violated to rescue this girl even though her life is not in danger?R. Karo concludes that one may violate Shabbat to rescue this girl and rules that way in his *Shulhan Arukh*[20]. While his precise logic will

be dealt with shortly, it is noteworthy that R. Avraham Gombiner in his *Magen Avraham*[21] explains this ruling by invoking the rule “Violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many Shabbatot." Since only through violation of Shabbat will this girl remain an observant Jew, the potential of many future observed Shabbatot overrides the prohibitions of this one Shabbat. Yet, how can this rule be invoked if it is rejected in Yoma?

6) While we have already quoted the talmudic passage that discusses life threatening situations on Shabbat, there is another passage that discusses in general what to do when the observance of a commandment poses a threat to one's life. In Sanhedrin (74a) there is a majority opinion that a person can never violate adultery, forbidden sexual union, and murder even if he must be martyred for this stance. However, any other commandment may be violated rather than sacrifice his life.This is derived from the verse (Leviticus 18:5) "And live by them." There is also a differentiation between public and private actions and times of peace versus times of oppression[22].

On the following column (74b), the Talmud debates whether a Gentile must sacrifice his life before violating one of his seven commandments[23]. Tosafot[24] record the following question. How it is possible to suggest that a Gentile is not obligated to give up his life? The source for the permission to violate the law is from "And live by them" which only applies to Jews[25]. Gentiles do not have this latitude and therefore must accept martyrdom. Rather, it is explained in Tosafot, "And live by them" is not the basis of saving one's life by violating a commandment. We already know that we should do that. However, once we derive that we cannot violate idolatry, forbidden sexual union, and murder perhaps we will compare all commandments to those three. It is for this that we need "And live by them." This verse teaches us not to extend the stricture from those three prohibitions to all commandments. However, the basic underlying reasoning, before we arrive at "And live by them," is that we violate commandments to save our lives and this applies to both Jews and Gentiles. What is this reasoning? R. Reuven Margoliyot[26] suggests that it is “Violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many Shabbatot." Here, too, we use the logic of violating one commandment so that many will be fulfilled[27].

It is now much harder to say that this reason has been rejected in favor of "And live by them."< While that dismissal seems to be clear in Yoma, Tosafot imply that the two reasons coexist. However, if they are complementary, why does the Gemara in Yoma reject the reason of “Violate one Shabbat…"[28]?

IV

Let us return to the passage in Yoma (85a-b) and, this time, analyze it more carefully. While the source for this passage is the Mekhilta on Exodus 31:13, we shall focus on the more familiar passage in the Gemara and note differences in notes[29] For the sake of presentation, we will divide the passage into a number of sections and discuss each section individually.

> R. Yishmael, R. Akiva, and R. Elazar ben Azariah[30] were once walking and Levi HaSadar and R. Yishmael the son of R. Elazar ben Azariah were walking behind them. The following question was asked to them: From where do we know that saving someone's life -- *pikuah nefesh* -- overrides Shabbat?

These three great sages of the Mishnah were walking and two of their students were following. The students asked a question and put their teachers on the spot. As an aside, it is interesting to note that the assumption of the question is that saving a life overrides Shabbat observance. Evidently, this was a pre-existing tradition and the students requested halakhic justification of this permission. As with so much of the Talmudic material, this was part of the oral Torah transmitted through the ages. These sages were only interested in relating this tradition to sources.

As we shall see, each of these three sages answered in a technical fashion. Rather than offering a conceptual reason why saving a life should override Shabbat, they tried to prove logically that it did. However, from their proofs we can deduce an underlying reason for this halakhah.

> R. Yishmael answered: It says, "If the thief is discovered while tunneling in[, and he is struck and dies, there is no blood-guilt on his account]" (Exodus 22:1). If there, where this thief may be coming for money or may be coming to kill, and bloodshed renders the land impure and causes the divine presence to leave Israel, one is still

> permitted to kill him to save one's life *kal va-homer* (*a fortiori*) that saving someone's life should override Shabbat.

R. Yishmael derives the permission to violate Shabbat from the verse regarding someone whose house is invaded by an intruder. Unsure whether this intruder is merely a thief or is a murderer, this person has Biblical permission to defend himself even if that means killing the intruder. Even though bloodshed is a terrible sin, it is permitted for this person to commit bloodshed in defense of himself. Saving his own life overrides the prohibition of bloodshed.

R. Yishmael argues that if when there is a doubt whether one's life is in danger one can still override a prohibition, and this prohibition is a very serious one, then certainly a definite danger to one's life overrides the lesser prohibition of Shabbat. In other words, if possibly saving my life is more important than murder then certainly a definite saving of my life is more important than Shabbat. According to R. Yishmael, life, as we suggested earlier, is more important than Shabbat observance.

> R. Akiva answered[31]: "If a man acts intentionally against his fellow [to kill him with guile, from My altar shall you take him to die]" (Exodus 21:14) -- From My altar but not from on top of My altar. Rabbah bar Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Yohanan: This was taught only regarding to kill but to let live, even from on top of My altar. If there, where there is a doubt whether his words are substantive and the worship overrides Shabbat *kal va-homer* that saving a life should override Shabbat.

This requires a bit of explanation. The verse tells us that a murderer may be taken away from the altar. However, the implication of the verse is that only someone who is next to the altar may be taken away. Someone who is on top of the altar, i.e. in the middle of the sacrificial service, cannot be taken away. The court's officers must wait for the worship to finish before taking away the suspect. R. Akiva implies, and R. Yohanan explains, that this is only regarding someone wanted for committing a crime. If the officers wish to take him away to punish him, they must wait until after he is finished. However, if there is someone else on trial and this person's testimony is required to acquit him,

then saving the accused's life overrides the service and the witness is taken away from on top of the altar.

R. Akiva then argues that since life overrides the sacrificial worship and the worship overrides Shabbat, logic dictates that saving a life should also override Shabbat. Here, however, we are unable to detect an underlying reason for this permission. All that we know is that saving someone's life overrides the sacrificial services and Shabbat. While we can speculate as to R. Akiva's reason, the texts do not give us an indication.[32]

> R. Elazar answered: If circumcision, which affects only one of the 248 limbs[33] in a human, overrides Shabbat *kal va-homer* that an entire body should override Shabbat.

R. Elazar offers what, at first, seems like a very straightforward answer based on the accepted rule that circumcision of an eight-day old baby is performed on Shabbat[34]. If we will violate Shabbat for only one limb, certainly we will violate Shabbat to save a life.

However, on closer examination the logic is somewhat elusive. Circumcision and saving a life are not comparable. The former is fulfilling the Biblical mandate to circumcise a child. The latter is about saving someone's life. Just because we perform a *mitzvah* on a limb on Shabbat does not imply that we will save someone's life. R. Hananel[35] suggests that an uncircumcised child is, in fact, in a life-threatening danger[36]. >From the fact that we will override Shabbat to perform the life-saving circumcision we can infer that we will override Shabbat for any life-saving activity. Yet, the *kal va-homer* is then lost. Since both circumcision and saving a life are equivalent, there is no lesser case that implies the circumstance in a greater case. The language used by R. Elazar ben Azariah makes R. Hananel's explanation difficult. Additionally, only circumcision of an eight-day old baby overrides Shabbat. A nine-day old baby who, for whatever reasons, is still uncircumcised cannot be circumcised on Shabbat[37].He must wait until Sunday. However, according to R. Hananel this child is also in danger and his circumcision should also override Shabbat[38].

Rashba[39] offers another explanation that alleviates all of these concerns. As he explains in the name of Tosafot[40], circumcision is a *mitzvah*. If performing this one mitzvah overrides Shabbat, then certainly we can save a life that will

perform many *mitzvot*. It is not danger to someone's life that overrides Shabbat observance. Rather, it is the fulfillment, or potential fulfillment, of commandments. We are permitted to save someone's life on Shabbat because this person will observe commandments in the future. According to R. Elazar ben Azariah, commandments, not life, override Shabbat observance.

Thus in the earliest discussion of why saving someone's life overrides Shabbat we find a basic disagreement. According to R. Yishmael, life overrides Shabbat. According to R. Elazar ben Azariah, commandments override Shabbat. Alas, R. Akiva's view remains undetermined.

This is the end of the discussion from the walk in which the students asked their teachers from where we know that saving a life overrides Shabbat. However, appended to this story are answers given by later generations. Unlike the earlier answers, which were attempts to derive an answer from logic, these answers are based on biblical exegesis.

> R. Yossi ben R. Yehudah[41] said: "However (*akh*), you must observe My Sabbaths" (Exodus 31:13) -- It could have been for everything but we learn from "however (*akh*)" to distinguish[42].

Here we see an example of rabbinic examination of the precise language of Scripture. What purpose does the word "*akh*" serve in this verse? English translations may render it "however" or "nevertheless" but these translations do not necessarily represent the precise Hebrew meaning. The Talmud[43] has many cases in which the word "*akh*" is shown to separate out an exceptional case44]. Its purpose in a biblical sentence is to limit the statement much like "however" can do. For example, "Walk slowly; however, while playing sports run quickly." Here, "however" limits the previous statement. In Hebrew, "*rak*" serves that purpose. *Akh*" similarly limits a statement. However, rather than limiting a previous statement it implies that the current statement is a limit."Run specifically while playing sports." Here, "specifically" shows that the current statement that one should run while playing sports is an exception. >From that sentence, we know that most times one should not run.

In our verse, we are told that we must observe Shabbat. "*Akh*" shows that this statement is limited and teaches us that this is an exception to the rule. How can observing Shabbat be an exception to the rule?The key to answering this

question is to note that "Sabbaths" is in plural. We are told that we must observe many Shabbatot and that this is an exception to the rule. R. Yossi ben Yehudah made the connection between this grammatical analysis and the already existing *halakhah* that saving a life overrides Shabbat observance. If someone's life is in danger, and should he perish he would obviously not be able to observe any further Shabbatot, one Shabbat may be violated in order to enable him to observe many future Shabbatot. In other words, observing many Shabbatot is the exception to the rule of observing one Shabbat. The exception that "*akh*" implies is that Shabbat can be set aside in order to facilitate the observance of many Shabbatot[45].

In relation to the dispute between R. Yishmael and R. Elazar ben Azariah over whether life overrides Shabbat or commandments override Shabbat, it seems that R. Yossi ben Yehudah would side with R. Elazar ben Azariah. R. Yossi ben Yehudah sees commandments, observance of future Shabbatot, as overriding the prohibitions of Shabbat.

> R. Yonatan ben Yosef[46] said: "For it is holy to you" (Exodus 31:14) -- It is given to your hands and not you to its hands.

This is a very simple and straightforward reason. Shabbat is given to people and not vice versa. Therefore, a person's life takes precedence over Shabbat. Within the dispute between R. Yishmael and R. Elazar ben Azariah, R. Yonatan ben Yosef is clearly on R. Yishmael's side that life overrides Shabbat.

> R. Shimon ben Menasia[47] said: "The Children of Israel shall observe the Shabbat [to make the Shabbat an eternal covenant for generations]" (Exodus 31:16) The Torah said to violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many future Shabbatot.

This is the explanation that was discussed towards the beginning of this essay. R. Shimon ben Menasia clearly states that one may violate Shabbat if that violation leads to the observance of future Shabbatot. He agrees with R. Elazar ben Azariah that commandments override Shabbat and not life[48].

After these six Tannaitic answers to the question of from where do we know that saving a life overrides Shabbat, the Talmud gives us one Amoraic answer[49].

> R. Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: If I was there, I would have said that my reason is better than all of yours. "And live by them" (Leviticus 18:5) and not that one should die by them.

As we have already explained, Shmuel's answer, which is accepted by this Talmudic passage as final, is explained by Tosafot as presuming that one may violate Shabbat in order to facilitate future observance of Shabbat. "And live by them" only teaches us not to draw the wrong inference and assume that since with regard to idolatry, forbidden sexual union, and murder one must give up one's life, so too by every mitzvah. To prevent that incorrect comparison, the Torah tells us "And live by them." However, the underlying reason why we may violate a precept to save someone's life is that he will thereby be able to fulfill future commandments.

Thus we see that aside from the seven-way dispute over the Scriptural/logical basis for this *halakhah*, there is a more fundamental dispute over its nature. According to R. Yishmael and R. Yonatan ben Yosef, saving a life overrides Shabbat because a life is more important than Shabbat observance. However, according to R. Elazar ben Azariah, R. Yossi ben Yehudah, R. Shimon ben Menasia, and Shmuel, only future observance of commandments overrides current prohibitions and allows the saving of a life on Shabbat. It is not worldly concerns that override the spirituality of Shabbat. Rather the spiritual value of future observance overrides the current Shabbat. This is the view that is accepted by the Talmud.

V

What we have seen is that while the Talmud rejects the many different derivations of the permission to violate Shabbat in order to save a life, it does not necessarily reject the underlying logics. Indeed, many of the different derivations agree regarding the logic. We can say that R. Shimon ben Menasia's phrase "Violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many future Shabbatot" is not unique to his derivation. It is a statement to which two other Tannaim and Shmuel would agree. Thus, when the Talmud accepts Shmuel's derivation, it is implicitly accepting R. Shimon ben Menasia's reason (but not his derivation) because, conceptually, he agrees with Shmuel.

Given that, when the Talmud in Shabbat (151b) cites R. Shimon ben Menasia's logic of "Violate one Shabbat for him so that he may observe many future Shabbatot" it is not siding with R. Shimon ben Menasia in the argument over the derivation of this rule. Rather, it is using his eloquent phrasing to represent the majority and final opinion regarding the *logic* of the permission. Ramban, too, utilizes this phrasing to explain why Shabbat may be violated to save a fetus. Similarly, Meiri used this logic, which is accepted by the Talmud, to explain the underlying Mishnah.

This logic, to which Shmuel agrees, is, according to Tosafot, the underlying reason of saving one's life by violating a commandment. This also explains why the Rambam, whose passion for noting Biblical sources of laws is well documented, only cited the logic of "Violate one Shabbat…" and not its Scriptural derivation. According to Shmuel, there is no Biblical source for this permission.

Let us return to R. Yosef Karo's discussion. He ruled that Shabbat may be violated to save a young girl from apostasy and R. Avraham Gombiner cited "Violate one Shabbat…" as a basis for this ruling. Not unbeknownst to R. Gombiner, R. Karo cited as his basis the language used in Shabbat (4a) "Sin so that your friend will benefit." Evidently, that rule is logically equivalent to that of "Violate one Shabbat…" However, the circumstances in which it appears is not appropriate to the language of "Violate one Shabbat…"[50] This equivalence should not be surprising because both rules share the same underlying logic -- sometimes it is necessary to violate a commandment in order to further greater observance.

Indeed, given this understanding, we can gain greater insight into a passage on Avodah Zarah (26a). Regarding a midwife treating a Gentile pregnant woman, R. Yosef suggested that the midwife should perform her services because of *evah*, which can perhaps be translated as "bad feelings". Gentiles would certainly resent this action so, rather than risk the consequences of refraining, the midwife should violate Shabbat and treat the woman. Abaye says that the midwife should refrain and say "For us, who observe Shabbat, I can violate Shabbat to treat. For you, who do not observe Shabbat, I cannot violate it."

Based on our understanding, Abaye is suggesting that Gentiles will accept a cogent and reasonable explanation. If we are to clarify to them that we can only violate Shabbat for commandments, including those observed by a non-Jewish Ger Toshav according to the ruling of Ramban, they will not bear any “bad feelings” over this religious obligation. In Abaye’s time, Gentiles understood and were respectful of religious obligations and would not have taken offense when these restrictions were adhered to.

What we have seen is that the laws about for whom Shabbat may be violated are not a definition of whose life is important and whose is unimportant. There is no implicit message that Jewish lives are more important than Shabbat while Gentile lives are not. No life is more important than following G-d's word. Rather, these rules are qualifications of how to follow the laws. The main goal is to maximize observance and, with regard to Shabbat, that means only violating it if this will lead to greater observance in the future. An observant Jew or a Ger Toshav will observe many future commandments and, therefore, violating one law today will lead to the observance of many future laws in the future.

VI

The question that still needs to be asked is how a religious system can give precedence to rules over life. How can observance of Shabbat be more important than saving a person? It seems like these rules are the product of a stale bureaucracy and not a system that has been called a “tree of life” whose “ways are ways of pleasantness.[51]”

This impression, however, is based on a limited focus. One has to look beyond the apparent to understand this issue. As we see life, it begins at birth and ends at death. However, Judaism teaches that there is more to life than worldly existence and more to man than his physical self.

Conventional wisdom has it that Judaism is a this-worldly religion while, in contrast, Christianity is next-worldly. Conveniently, this aphorism glosses over the ascetic and pietistic strains of Judaism. More crucially, however, is that all segments of traditional Judaism affirm a certain degree of next-worldliness. Even Maimonides, who is frequently cited as the paragon of this-worldliness, agrees that man must be concerned regarding his place in eternity. Every

person is imbued with a soul that can remain forever[52]. Man's actions and intellectual attainments in this world define how he will spend the eternity of the next world[53]. A focus on the spiritual, on the one thing that will last forever, is critical in Maimonides' thought.

How does man perfect his soul, his own piece of eternity? This crucial question is not one that lends itself to a human answer. How can a finite person know what is best for an infinite soul? However, G-d has given us detailed instructions on how to refine our souls – through mitzvot. Every commandment we fulfill makes an indelible mark on our soul[54]. Whether it be by following in G-d's ways and thereby making a soul more divine-like, or by acknowledging G-d's immanent presence and thereby drawing a soul closer to G-d, following mitzvot has tremendous spiritual effects[55].

In contrast, man's physical life is fleeting. Pleasures are temporary; joys are short-lived. Physical existence in itself lasts only approximately eighty years. After that, one spends an eternity in the spiritual[56]. While there are many important things man can do in this world, his ultimate goal is to prepare his soul for the rest of time. There is a disagreement among Jewish philosophers over the focus in this world. According to some, this world must be spent focused on the next[57]. As the Mishnah[58] says, "This world is like a corridor before the world-to-come." The other view is that man has an opportunity in this world to rise to great spiritual heights, to bring a measure of the eternal into this ephemeral world[59]. However, all agree that the eternal is our focus. Refining souls, mending worlds, fulfilling commandments – these are man's duty in this world.

R. Yisrael Salanter[60] asked why a righteous person should not want to die. Granted, suicide is forbidden, but if he happens to die we should be happy for him. In this world there is always the possibility that he may sin but in the next world he is on the highest plane. While the average person needs to remain in this world to refine his soul, the righteous have already done so. Why should he not want to die? There are a number of possible answers to this. However, the question alone brings into sharp focus what man's duty is in this world.

This is not meant to minimize the importance of this world. It is only here that man has the ability to choose his destiny and it is only here that man can improve his lot. Mitzvot, perfecting the soul, are only for this world[61]. In this

sense, man's existence in this physical world is more divine-like that in the spiritual world. Here, man, like G-d, can create[62]! Here, man can finish his soul by perfecting it. It is in this world that man retains this aspect of the divine image.

Yet, as we said before, man must remain focused. The Talmud concludes, "It would have been better for man had he not been born but now that he has been he should examine (some read: improve) his ways."[63] It is our effect on the eternal that is crucial. Granted, physical pleasures are acceptable and even encouraged in moderation[64] – hence Judaism's alleged this-worldliness. However, this is only to strengthen us in our mission to make permanent and everlasting changes.

With this said, it is therefore crucial to evaluate the world from this broad, eternal perspective. When making choices and determining what is right, we must look at the long-term ramifications. In our case of violating Shabbat to save a life, we are dealing with Shabbat violation – an occurrence that has eternal ramifications – and someone's fleeting physical life. Regardless of what happens, this person's soul will remain forever. The only question is about his temporary, physical life. Looking at this with our broad perspective, temporary life cannot take precedence over a permanent change. This-worldly life cannot trump next-worldly life. Only commandments themselves, many eternal changes, can override one eternal change. It is the greatest eternal effect that must determine what takes precedence.

When Dr. Shahak criticized Judaism of being racist by denying medical treatment to Gentiles on Shabbat, he was wrong on many counts. First, this is not practiced today[65], as can be evidenced by the treatment of Gentiles by Jewish doctors in Sha'arei Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem or by Hatzoloh volunteers in New York. Second, the determination is not race-driven. In theory, it applies to both non-religious Jews and Gentiles. It also does not apply to all Gentiles. As we have seen from Ramban, we are allowed to violate Shabbat to save Gentiles who have officially accepted on themselves to live righteous lives. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the permission, or lack thereof, to violate Shabbat to save someone's life is not in any way a valuation of that person's life because no life, whether Jewish or Gentile, is more important than Shabbat.

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* This article was written shortly after Dr. Shahak's death on July 2, 2001.

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[1] His treatments of this topic have become so popular that there are hundreds of websites containing summaries or quotations of his work. At least one of his books, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion - The Weight of Three Thousand Years*, has been placed entirely on the internet.

[2] Israel Shahak, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion - The Weight of Three Thousand Years*, ch. 1

[3] Cf. *Shulhan Arukh*, Orah Hayim 246:1; R. Yehezkel Landau, *Dagul Mervavah*, Yoreh Deah 151 on *Shakh* 6.

[4] R. Immanuel Jakobovits, "A Modern Blood Libel – L'Affaire Shahak," *Tradition*, vol. 8 no. 2 (Summer 1996), pp. 58-65.

[5] Cf. Rashi, Sanhedrin 74a sv sevara; R. Yisrael Meir Kagan, *Mishnah Berurah* 329:4 Biur Halakhah sv ela.

[6] Avodah Zarah 26a

[7] R. Moshe Sofer, *Responsa Hatam Sofer*, Yoreh Deah 131, Hoshen Mishpat 194; R. Yisrael Lifschitz, *Tiferet Yisrael*, Avodah Zarah 2:6; R. Hayim Halberstam, *Responsa Divrei Hayim* vol. 2 Orah Hayim 25; R. Shalom David Ungvar, *Responsa Yad Shalom* 57; R. Mordekhai Ya'akov Breisch, *Responsa Helkat Ya'akov* vol. 2 54; R. Moshe Feinstein, *Iggerot Moshe* vol. 4, 49; R. Yitzhak Ya'akov Weiss, *Responsa Minhat Yitzhak*, vol. 1 53, vol. 3 20, vol. 10 31:14; R. Eliezer Yehudah Waldenburg, *Responsa Tzitz Eliezer*, vol. 8 15:6; R. Ovadia Yosef, *Responsa Yabia Omer*, vol. 8 Orah Hayim 38; R. Shlomo Zalman Braun, *She'arim Metzuyanim Bahalakhah*, 92:1; R. Zvi Hirsch Shapira, *Darkhei Teshuvah*, 158:3; R. Yehoshua Yishayahu Neuwirth, *Shemirat*

Shabbat Kehilkhatah ch. 40 n. 42; R. Simhah Benzion Rabinowitz, *Piskei Teshuvot*, 390:2

[8] R. Yosef Teomim, *Pri Megadim*, Orah Hayim 328 MZ 6

[9] R. Mordekhai Ya'akov Breisch, *Responsa Helkat Ya'akov* vol. 1 45; R. Shmuel Wosner, *Responsa Shevet HaLevi*, vol. 3 36, vol. 5 48; R. Yitzhak Ya'akov Weiss, *Responsa Minhat Yitzhak*, vol. 3 20, vol. 10 31:14; R. Eliezer Yehudah Waldenburg, *Responsa Tzitz Eliezer*, vol. 8 15:5-6; R. Ovadia Yosef, *Responsa Yabia Omer*, vol. 8 Orah Hayim 38:8; R. Yehoshua Yishayahu Neuwirth, *Shemirat Shabbat Kehilkhatah* ch. 32 n. 1; R. Simhah Benzion Rabinowitz, *Piskei Teshuvot*, 329:2

[10] *Additions to Sefer Hamitzvot*, Positive Commandments that the Rambam Neglected, 16. Cf. R. Shimon ben Zemah Duran, *Zohar HaRakia*, 81 n. 39. Cf. however, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Shabbat, 2:12.

[11] Cf. Rashi, Yoma 85b sv veshamru

[12] Cf. R. Meir Ibn Habib, *Tosefot Yom HaKippurim*, ad loc. sv amar

[13] We will later conclude that the tannaitic *derivations*, but not necessarily the reasons, have been rejected.

[14] End of Hilkhot Yom HaKippurim

[15] *Torat Ha'Adam*, *Kitvei HaRamban*, vol. 2 pp. 28-29; cited in R. Nissim ben Reuven's commentary to Rif, Yoma 3b sv vekatuv; cf. *Hiddushei HaRamban*, Nidah 44b sv veha; *Beit Yosef*, Orah Hayim 390

[16] This does not imply that abortion is permissible. See R. David M. Feldman, *Birth Control in Jewish Law*, part 5.

[17] Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Mamrim 2:4

[18] Cf. Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Teshuvah 1:1

[19] Orah Hayim, end of 306

[20] Orah Hayim 306:14

[21] Ibid. 29

[22] Cf. *Shulhan Arukh*, Yoreh Deah 157 where the detailed laws are discussed

[23] The conclusion is no. Cf. *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Melakhim 10:2

[24] Ad loc. sv ben

[25] Cf. R. Shmuel Eliezer Eidels, *Hiddushei Maharsha*, ad. loc.

[26] *Margoliyot HaYam* 74b:29

[27] Cf. R. Eliyahu Mizrahi's commentary on Rashi, Exodus 4:24. Our formulation answers R. Yehudah Rozannes' question in his *Parashat Derakhim*, essay 2 in the first paragraph.

[28] For some later examples, see R. Avraham ben Mordekhai, *Responsa Ginat Veradim*, 3:1 sv. hineh; R. Zvi Hirsch Chajes, Glosses to Shabbat 30a sv ha; R. Yosef Engel, *Gilyonei HaShas*, Yoma 85b sv. lo; R. Shmuel Engel, *Responsa Maharash Engel*, 4:72; R. David Zvi Hoffman, *Melamed Leho'il*; 2:32 sv. ule'inyan.

[29] Cf. also Mekhilta on Exodus 31:16; Tosefta Shabbat 16:13-14; Tanhuma Yitro 8, (ed. Buber) Vayeshev 8; Yalkut Shimoni, Mishpatim 327, Ki Tisa 391; *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus ch. 21 no. 273, ch. 22 no. 7, ch. 31 no. 30, 31, 87.

[30] In Mekhilta, R. Elazar ben Azariah is mentioned before R. Akiva.

[31] Mekhilta has it simply "R. Akiva said: If bloodshed overrides the service which overrides Shabbat *a fortiori* that saving a life overrides Shabbat." Also, in the Mekhilta R. Akiva's explanation comes after R. Elazar ben Azariah's.

[32] Cf. R. Alexander Shor, *Bekhor Shor*, Yoma ad loc.

[33] Mekhilta does not have the number of limbs in a person. Regarding the commandments of the Torah corresponding to the limbs of a person, see Makkot 23b.

[34] Shabbat 132a; *Tanhuma*, Lekh Lekha 16, Masei 1; *Yalkut Shimoni*, Tazria 547, Emor 643

[35] Commentary to Shabbat 132a

[36] Cf. Exodus 4:24-26

[37] Shabbat 132b; *Shulhan Arukh*, Orah Hayim 331:4

[38] Cf. R. Shmuel Strashun (Rashash), Glosses to Yoma 85b, sv Rashi

[39] Novellae to Shabbat, 132a sv umah

[40] Cf. Tosafot HaRosh, ad loc. sv k"v

[41] Mekhilta has R. Yossi HaGelili

[42] Mekhilta adds: There are some Shabbatot which you override and some Shabbatot which you observe.

[43] Pesahim 5a, 71a; Eruvin 105a; Sukkah 48a; Bava Kama 11b; Shevuot 13a; Menahot 37b; Bekhorot 15a; Keritot 7a; Temurah 25a

[44] Cf. Yerushalmi Berakhot 9:5 (67b); R. Meir Leibush Malbim, *HaTorah VeHamitzvah*, *Ayelet HaShahar* 591.

[45] Malbim, *HaTorah VeHamitzvah*, Exodus 31:13 n. 3. This formulation of *akh*'s function would explain Rashi's commentary on this verse in light of Ramban's questions.

[46] Mekhilta has R. Shimon ben Menasia

[47] Mekhilta has R. Natan

[48] It has been argued by some, e.g. R. Yosef Babad, *Minhat Hinukh* 32 (ed. Makhon Yerushalayim vol. 1 p. 178), that according to R. Shimon ben Menasia only future observance of Shabbat, as opposed to any other commandment, can override a current Shabbat. However, the wording of the Talmudic passage does not seem to leave room for this limitation. Cf. R. Moshe Ibn Habib,

Tosefot Yom HaKippurim, Yoma 85b sv R"Sh; R. Hayim Elazar Shapira, *Minhat Elazar*, 1:9.

[49] Surprisingly, this answer can also be found anonymously in Tosefta, Shabbat 16:14. R. David Pardo, *Hasdei David*, ad loc. suggests that Shmuel never saw this Tosefta and arrived at the same reasoning on his own. Efraim Urbach, *Hazal*, ch. 13 n. 28 suggests that this is an Amoraic addition to the Tosefta.

[50] On the subject of "Sin so that your friend will benefit," see Tosafot, Shabbat 4a sv vekhi; R. Hershel Schachter, *Be'ikvei Hatzon* pp. 14-18.

[51] Proverbs 3:13-14

[52] Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Yesodei HaTorah 4:8-9

[53] Ibid.; Hilkhot Teshuvah 8:3

[54] R. Saadia Gaon, *Emunot VeDe'ot*, 5:1 (ed. Kaffih,) pp. 168-171; Ramban, *Sha'ar HaGemul* in *Kitvei HaRamban*, vol. 2 p. 270. Cf. R. Elhanan Wasserman, *Kovetz Ma'amarim*, pp. 19-20.

[55] Cf. R. Natan Tzvi Finkel, *Or HaTzafun*, pp. 7-10

[56] Cf. R. Moshe Hayim Luzzatto (Ramhal), *Messilat Yesharim*, ch. 1

[57] Ibid.

[58] Avot 4:16

[59] R. Yehudah HaLevi, *Kuzari*, 1:109, 3:1

[60] *Or Yisrael*, ch. 23

[61] Eruvin 22a; Shabbat 30a

[62] Cf. R. Hayim of Volozhin, *Nefesh HaHayim*, 1:3-4

[63] Eruvin 13b

[64] Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot De'ot ch. 4; R. Yehudah HaLevi, *Kuzari*, 2:50.

[65] See note 7.

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Kapparos, Tricking G-d?

R. Gil answered many things. However, the year now is 2025. More reasons to hate Jews have arisen. I have seen many comments online suggesting that we try to trick G-d. This is ridiculous.

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/989585/jewish/Kaparot.htm#What

The above link delves into Kapparos. However, I'd like to keep it short.

Approaching the Day of Judgement - Yom Kippur, us Jews wake up. From old to young, from religious to secular - we must turn back to G-d. Leading up to it, starting from New Years - Rosh Hashana - there are 10 Days of Repentance. In this time it's customary to wave a chicken around your head 3 times whilst saying a prayer. This chicken is then slaughtered by Kosher Laws. This means practically - the least pain possible when slaughtering the animal. Even whilst waving the chicken around your head, you have to be very careful as to not harm it. Albeit, no matter what it's hard to have the chicken not scream. Hence the term "What are you chicken?". There's a reason chicken has become synonymous with coward. Now, there are individuals and pictures online of careless Jews swinging the chicken like madmen - this is against Jewish Law. Harming an animal is a huge sin. This is why we're so meticulous in the way we slaughter. So what's happening? We're beseeching G-d, putting a foot forward and giving up a meal. We're begging that our merits outweigh our sins, that this small step in doing good can "transfer our sins" to the chicken instead. Are we actually atoned for this? No. We are hopeful that G-d forgives us for our sins. So what happens to the chicken? It is slaughtered, the meat is prepped, and then given to the poor. That is all. The chicken is not a sin-offering, we cannot bring those without a Temple. It's to show G-d that we wish to be good, that we wish to give charity - that we can grow. It is up to Him if He decides to be merciful and forgiving.

Loophole Religion, The Eruv

(Copied from https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3184201/jewish/Why-Do-Jews-Carry-in-an-Eruv-on-Shabbat.htm)

Question:

I recently read an article about how a Jewish community wants to create an eruv,a network of strings that will allow them to carry on Shabbat in an entire neighborhood. It was briefly described as a "legal loophole" constructed by the rabbis of the Talmud.
I'm confused. If the Torah says that carrying outside is forbidden on Shabbat, how can a few barely visible wires make a difference?

Answer:

Your question is a good one—and an old one. Almost 900 years ago, the great medieval philosopher and poet Rabbi Judah ha-Levi (1080–1141) wrote about an exchange between a Jewish sage and a king who asked the same question.[1]
Before we can understand why an eruv is not a loophole in a law prohibiting carrying, let's first understand why and where carrying is forbidden in the first place.

The Prohibition

On Shabbat, one of the 39 forbidden activities is to carry anything four cubits (approximately six feet) within a public domain. This also includes transporting things from a private domain into a public one, or vice versa.[2] In this context, "private" and "public" has little to do with who holds the deed and everything to do with the physical properties and function of the area.
A "private domain" is an enclosed area. A "public domain" is generally defined as an unenclosed major thoroughfare that is used regularly by the public, and is at least 16 cubits wide (about 24 feet). Some are of the opinion that it also needs to have 600,000 people passing through it on a daily basis.[3]
Now, if it would be permitted to carry in open areas that are shared by many people but are not public domains per se, confusion would be likely to follow. So, to err on the side of caution, the rabbis expanded the carrying ban to extend to

any area, unless it is both fenced in and owned privately. This rabbinic law provides a clearcut distinction that avoids confusion and prevents violation of Torah law. This pseudo-public area is called a karmelit.[4]

The Exceptions

In order for carrying to be allowed, you'll need both an eruv and a tzurat ha-petach. The word eruv (which we will explain later) actually refers to food that serves to symbolically transform the shared area into an area owned by a single household. The tzurat ha-petach is a series of structures that transform the area into a closed area. Together, the two mark the area as private. Although not technically correct, the term eruv has come to refer to the tzurat ha-petach structure as well. The eruv is often large enough to include entire neighborhoods with homes, apartments and synagogues, making it possible to carry on Shabbat, since one is never leaving the private domain.
But what kind of enclosure do you need?
If the area contains a proper public domain (as defined above), then it needs to be surrounded by real walls or natural barriers. For a rabbinically ordained karmelit, under which category many neighborhoods fall, a technical enclosure may suffice.[5]
In that case the wall may have many doorways, leaving large open spaces. Essentially, this is the kind of "wall" we are creating with wires and poles; the poles are the doorposts, and the cables strung above them are the lintels.
In addition to providing Jewish people with more freedom to enjoy their Shabbat, Rabbi Judah ha-Levi explains that the relatively simple route to privatizing a karmelit is deliberate, in order that a distinction be made between the the rabbinic enactment and the biblical prohibition of carrying in a proper public domain.[6]

The Real Eruv

But walls alone are not enough. In order for an area to be private, it needs to belong to a single household or entity.
This stipulation originated with King Solomon, who foresaw that if people were allowed to carry in public, albeit enclosed, areas, this would result in confusion, and the entire law would be forgotten or distorted. Indeed, the Talmud records that after King Solomon made this enactment, a divine voice from heaven proclaimed the profound wisdom of this enactment.[7]

In order to symbolically join multiple families into a single household, King Solomon and his court established the concept of eruvei chatzeirot, whereby everyone in the area contributes food (or, as is usually done, one person can gift the food to everyone) to be kept in one of the houses. Since they all share food, they are now one household. The word eruv means “blending,” as the purpose of this food is to mix the entire community together into one.[8]

Don’t Try This at Home

It is important to keep in mind that the construction of an eruv is one of the more complex areas of Jewish law. Just because a particular area is enclosed by poles and wires does not necessarily allow carrying within that area. Many poles and strings do not qualify as doorways, and many areas are bona fide public domains and cannot be included in an eruv. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that an expert rabbi oversee the construction of a municipal eruv.
Among all the other technical details of the construction that the rabbi will need to work out, he will also ascertain whether the area in question is a karmelit. Such an eruv is not only not a loophole, it is part and parcel of the original rabbinic enactment.

Note:

1) An eruv allows one to carry only items which are permitted to be used on Shabbat and are actually needed on Shabbat.
2) According to many authorities, it is not possible to create a kosher eruv for many urban areas, even if there are fewer than 600,000 that walk the streets. Generally speaking, enclosures that surround entire cities rely on many lenient halachic opinions that are not accepted by all. Halachah encourages a devout Jew to be cautious about this.
3) The Lubavitcher Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—taught that an eruv should be built only in a community where the local rabbis feel that it would enhance the careful observance of Shabbat, rather than cause people to be more lax. He also cautioned that an eruv should not enclose an entire city, so that people will know that there are places where it is forbidden to carry. Conversely, if carrying would be permitted in the entire city, people will grow accustomed to carrying on Shabbat, and continue to do so even where there is no eruv.

The Fitz Conclusion

In truth, this is not a conclusion. Judaism is extremely nuanced and logical. Antisemites continue to find things in our religion to zoom in on and misconstrue. With that being said, as need be I will provide more ample explanations when necessary. I will try to update this as more things are brought up. I just beg the reader to not judge any religion or ideology by the extremists. Religion is beautiful. Extremism is a cancerous route. As Maimonides teaches “the best path for man is to walk the middle path”. In everything there ought to be balance. I conclude with my favorite Jewish quotes, some of which I have placed as my phone wallpaper.

“Tangentially, the Gemara mentions that they said about Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai that no one ever preceded him in issuing a greeting, not even a non-Jew in the marketplace, as Rabban Yoḥanan would always greet him first”
-Talmud Berachot 17a

“Love your fellow as yourself” -Leviticus 19:18

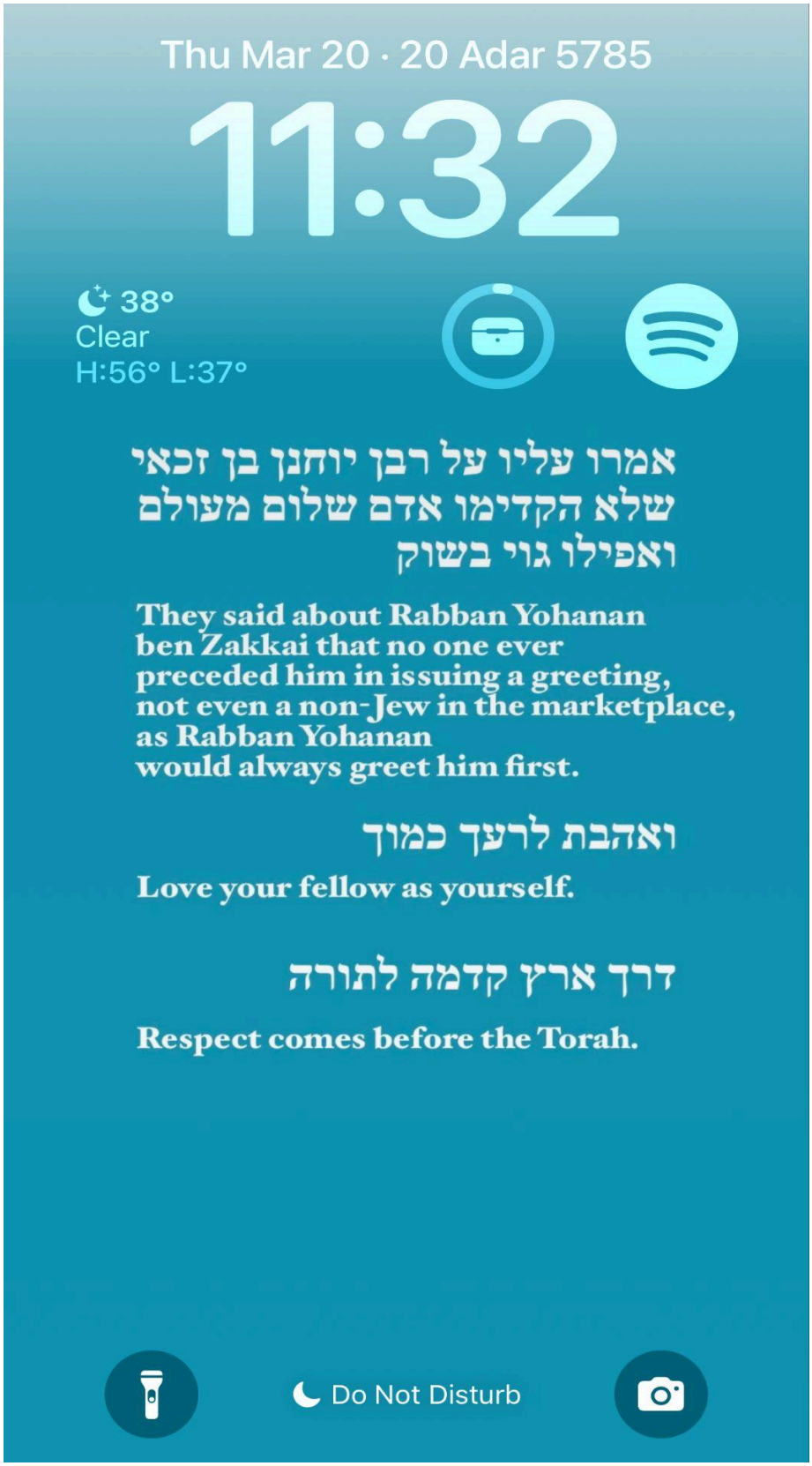
“Respect comes before Torah” -Midrash Vayikra Rabbah 9:3

“Hillel used to say: be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and drawing them close to the Torah.” -Pirkei Avot 1:12

“Great is human dignity as it overrides a prohibition in the Torah”

-Talmud Megillah 3b

“You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt”
-Deuteronomy 10:19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אמרו עליו על רבן יוחנן בן זכאי
שלא הקדימו אדם שלום מעולם
ואפילו גוי בשוק
They said about Rabban Yohanan
ben Zakkai that no one ever
preceded him in issuing a greeting,
not even a non-Jew in the marketplace,
as Rabban Yohanan
would always greet him first.
ואהבת לרעך כמוך
Love your fellow as yourself.
דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה
Respect comes before the Torah.
Do Not Disturb